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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes a study of citizenship and social studies attitudes and knowledge conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The survey of citizenship was conducted during the 1968-69 and 1969-70 school years; the survey of social studies was administered during the 1971-72 school year. During the school year 1975-76, items from both assessments were reassessed to determine changes in performance. Test items emphasized political knowledge and attitudes in five major content areas: constitutional rights, respect for others, structure and function of government, political process, and international affairs. In this report, the first five chapters describe results for each of the five content areas. Chapter six gives results for different population subgroups, and chapter seven presents interpretive remarks about the data by experts in the fields of citizenship and social studies. Many tables and charts supplement the written text in each chapter. (AV)

CHANGES IN POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES, 1969 - 76

SELECTED RESULTS FROM THE SECOND NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS OF CITIZENSHIP AND SOCIAL STUDIES

Citizenship/Social Studies Report No. 07-CS-02

by the
National Assessment of Educational Progress

Education Commission of the States
Suite 700, 1860 Lincoln Street
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MARCH 1978

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U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
Joseph A. Califano Jr., *Secretary*

Education Division
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The cost figure cited above represents the total amount of money expended since late 1973 on assessments in art, career and occupational development, reading, writing, social studies/citizenship, science, basic life skills, mathematics and consumerism, resulting to date, in numerous reports, papers, articles, presentations and assessment materials, many of which are used in state and local assessment programs. A complete list of all such materials is available upon request.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF EXHIBITS

LIST OF FIGURES

FOREWORD

When the U.S. Office of Education was chartered in 1867, one charge to its commissioners was to determine the nation's progress in education. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) was initiated a century later to address in a systematic way that charge.

Each year since 1969, National Assessment has gathered information about levels of educational achievement across the country and reported its findings to the nation. NAEP surveys the educational attainments of 9-year-olds, 13-year-olds, 17-year-olds and adults (ages 26–35) in 10 learning areas: art, career and occupational development, citizenship, literature, mathematics, music, reading, science, social studies and writing. Different learning areas are assessed every year, and all areas are periodically reassessed in order to measure change in educational achievement. National Assessment has interviewed and tested more than 630,000 young Americans since 1969.

Learning area assessments evolve from a consensus process. Each assessment is the product of several years of work by a great many educators, scholars and lay persons from all over the nation. Initially, these people design objectives for each subject area, proposing general goals they feel Americans should be achieving in the course of their education. After careful reviews, these objectives are given to exercise (item) writers, whose task it is to create measurement tools appropriate to the objectives.

When the exercises have passed extensive reviews by subject-matter specialists, measurement experts and lay persons, they are administered to probability samples. The people who comprise those samples are chosen in such a way that the results of their assessment can be generalized to an entire national population. That is, on the basis of the performance of about 2,500 9-year-olds on a given exercise, we can generalize about the probable performance of all 9-year-olds in the nation.

After assessment data have been collected, scored and analyzed, National Assessment publishes reports to disseminate results as widely as possible. Not all exercises are released for publication. Because NAEP will administer some of the same exercises again in the future to determine whether the performance level of Americans has increased or decreased, it is essential that they not be released in order to preserve the integrity of the study.

This report, *Changes in Political Knowledge and Attitudes, 1969–76,* summarizes the National Assessment study of citizenship and social studies. Another report available in these areas is *Education for Citizenship: A Bicentennial Survey*, Report No. 07-CS-01.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many organizations and individuals have made substantial contributions to the citizenship/social studies assessment. Unfortunately, it is not possible to acknowledge them all here, and an apology is due to those whose names have been omitted.

The objectives and exercises in the area of citizenship were prepared by the American Institutes for Research (AIR), Palo Alto, California. The original preparation of objectives and exercises in the area of social studies was done by the Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey. Additional exercises in the attitudinal domain were developed by AIR. Materials were reviewed by dozens of consultants, including educators, subject-matter experts and interested lay persons, under the general guidance of the National Assessment staff.

The administration of the citizenship/social studies assessment was conducted by the Research Triangle Institute, Raleigh, North Carolina, and the Measurement Research Center (MRC), Iowa City, Iowa. Scoring and processing were carried out by MRC and by the National Assessment staff.

The actual preparation of this report was a collaborative effort of the National Assessment staff. Special thanks must be given to the following people: Data Processing Department, for data processing support; Valerie Daniels, for technical proofreading; Marci Reser and Jessica Grant, for production; Rexford Brown, for editorial supervision; Ina Mullis for technical planning, analysis and editing. The report was written by Barbara Ward.

Roy H. Forbes
Director

INTRODUCTION

Significant changes occurred in the political climate of the nation and the world between the early and the mid-1970s. In 1972, Richard Nixon was the President of the United States, and the Viet Nam War, although winding down, was still consuming much of the nation's emotional and economic energy. By 1975, the Watergate scandal, capturing the attention of much of the nation, had forced the resignation of President Nixon and Gerald Ford had assumed the presidency. Foreign policy focused upon Henry Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy in the mid-East. Young men were no longer threatened by the draft; the economy, the energy crisis and other domestic matters absorbed the national interest.

Changes in the educational climate also took place. The protests of the sixties at the college level led to a relaxation of course requirements, which gradually filtered down to the secondary schools. In addition, students gained more freedom in course selection, and curricula in many subject areas became more oriented toward problem-solving skills and acquisition of general concepts.

Along with these developments, did any changes occur in students' attitudes and awareness about politics or in their knowledge about the U.S. government and political processes?

The National Assessment of Educational Progress is charged with monitoring change in levels of achievement of American young people. It has conducted several surveys of young Americans aged 9, 13 and 17[1] that included items on political knowledge and attitudes.

[1] Data were gathered for both in-school and out-of-school 17-year-olds in most surveys; but, for the sake of comparability to other age levels, only in-school data are reported here.

The Citizenship and Social Studies Assessments

A survey of citizenship was conducted during the 1968–69 and 1969–70 school years, a survey in the area of social studies was administered during the 1971–72 school year. In the school year 1975–76, items from both assessments were reassessed to determine changes in performance. The following table displays the exact dates for these assessments. Approximately 60% of the items measuring political knowledge and attitudes were from the citizenship assessment, and approximately 40% were from the social studies assessment.

	First Citizenship Assessment	First Social Studies Assessment	Second Citizenship and Social Studies Assessment
Age 9	Winter, 1970	Winter, 1972	Winter, 1976
Age 13	Fall, 1969	Fall, 1971	Fall, 1975
Age 17	Spring, 1969	Spring, 1972	Spring, 1976

The first assessment of citizenship was administered to 17-year-olds in the spring of 1969, to 13-year-olds in the fall of 1969 and to 9-year-olds in the winter of 1970. The first assessment of social studies was administered to 13-year-olds in the fall of 1971, to 9-year-olds in the winter of 1972 and to 17-year-olds in the spring of 1972. The second assessment of items from both assessments was administered to 13-year-olds in the fall of 1975, to 9-year-olds in the winter of 1976 and to 17-year-olds in the spring of 1976.

Thus, seven years separate the first and second administration of citizenship items for 17-year-olds, while the first and second assessments of these items for 9- and 13-year-olds span six years. Four years separate the first and second administrations of social studies items for all age groups.

For purposes of convenience in this report, each assessment year is referred to by the *last* year of the school year in which the assessment took place. Thus, 13-year-old performance is discussed as performance in 1970, 1972 or 1976 even though they were assessed in the fall of the school years 1969–70, 1971–72 and 1975–76.

Developing Objectives and Items

The political knowledge and attitudes items were designed to measure achievement of objectives in the citizenship and social studies areas. The objectives represent a consensus of educators, subject-matter experts and concerned lay persons about what young Americans should know and be able to do in these subject areas. These objectives are not an attempt to mandate behavior or value systems; rather, they present goals that a diverse group of people identified as desirable for young Americans to accomplish. National Assessment results describe the number of people achieving various aspects of these goals and changes in those numbers over time but do not indicate the number that educators or the public might expect to achieve a particular goal.

All National Assessment items and scoring guides are reviewed by groups that include educators, subject-matter experts and lay persons to insure that items will not be misinterpreted by students, that the reading level is appropriate for the age group assessed and that scoring guides are correct. To guard against the possibility of racial, ethnic or sexual bias, representatives of minority groups are included in the review process.

Items are tried out on small groups of students, and any unforeseen difficulties with the items are corrected at this stage.

Measuring Changes in Achievement

To measure changes in performance, testing conditions must be as nearly the same as possible each time the measurement is taken. Items used to measure change are identical in wording and form in each assessment. National Assessment makes every effort to hold conditions constant by tape-recording instructions and items and by using trained administrators, rather than classroom personnel, to conduct the assessment. Items are read to students on tape to minimize the effect of reading difficulties.

Comparable samples of young people are drawn for each assessment year in order to make comparisons of results across years possible. Minor variations that occurred in reporting group definitions over time are taken into account during the data analysis.[2]

Scoring of all items must remain consistent across assessment years. Therefore, all the first assessment citizenship open-ended responses were rescored together with the 1976 responses. Scoring guides, which define categories of acceptable and unacceptable responses, were revised to include examples of responses in various categories from both assessment years. For the social studies items, a subsample of the 1976 responses was obtained by randomly selecting responses from each sampling unit across the country. Scoring guides were revised to include examples of both 1972 and 1976 responses. Each of the selected responses was scored by two 1976 scorers, and the consistency of their scores with the score given in 1972 was checked. Scoring done in 1976 was found to be consistent with scoring done in 1972. Some scoring guides used in 1972 were revised to account for responses obtained in 1976. In these cases, the 1972 responses were rescored with the 1976 responses.

Reporting the Data

Differences in performance between assessments on specific items are described as changes *only* if the difference is statistically significant at the .05 level. This means, statistically, that we are 95% confident that these differences are real and not a chance artifact of the study design or the sample. Differences that are *not* statistically significant at the .05 level are described as being "not appreciably different."

[2] J.R. Chromy et al., *The National Assessment Approach to Sampling* (Denver, Colo.: National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1974).

In rare cases, two change percentages will be identical, but only one will be statistically significant; or, the smaller of the two differences may be significant while the larger is not. These situations are consequences of differing amounts of sampling error.

This report also describes differences in average performance. Performance is averaged over a group of items for each assessment year, and the difference between the averages is then computed. Positive differences indicate that performance in 1976 was higher than in the first assessment; negative differences show that performance in the second assessment was lower than in the first. Average differences are asterisked only if they are significant at the .05 level.

National Assessment releases for publication approximately half of the items used in a particular assessment year. The items that are not released are kept secure and will be used to measure changes in achievement in the next assessment. In this report, results for both released items and unreleased items are discussed; however, the text of unreleased items is not given and these items are not described in detail. A list of all the items and their technical reference numbers is given in Appendix B to facilitate further study of the items in future NAEP technical reports.

Summarizing Changes in Achievement

Each chapter in this report includes items taken from both the citizenship and the social studies assessments. Because these assessments covered different periods of time, we cannot average all of the items together to arrive at a mean percentage for a chapter. However, we can average all the social studies items and all the citizenship items to arrive at two averages for the items in a given chapter. Because the number of items used to calculate each average is relatively small, the average can be unduly influenced by large changes on one or two items. When evaluating performance trends, readers should consider the number of items on which performance went up or down, the size of the changes and the relative importance of the content of items showing changes as well as differences in averages.

In this report, we compare average performance on identical sets of items administered at two different points in time. Comparisons between the average performance of different age groups should not be made because these averages are based on different sets of items. Similarly, valid comparisons cannot be made among different content areas or for citizenship and social studies items. For example, 13-year-olds' average performance in the area of constitutional rights should not be compared with 17-year-olds' average performance in that area; 13-year-olds' performance on constitutional rights items should not be compared with their performance in the area of structure and function of government; 13-year-olds' performance on constitutional rights should not be compared to 17-year-olds' performance on structure and function of government items, and so forth.

Measuring Political Knowledge and Attitudes

The items measuring political knowledge and attitudes are categorized in five major content areas: (1) constitutional rights, (2) respect for others, (3) structure and function of government, (4) political process and (5) international affairs. Results for all political *knowledge* questions compared to political *attitude* questions are summarized in Appendix C.

It should be remembered that the items used by National Assessment do not cover everything that might be asked about a specific content area. Thus, care should be used in generalizing results from a particular set of items to a general statement about a content area.

Organization of the Report

The first five chapters describe results for each of the five content areas. The sixth chapter gives results for different population subgroups, and the seventh presents interpretive remarks about the data by experts in the fields of citizenship and social studies.

In each of the first five chapters, highlights of the results are presented first, followed by a summary of results for the content area and a discussion of

specific items and their results. Specific items are grouped by topic.

Reading the Graphs

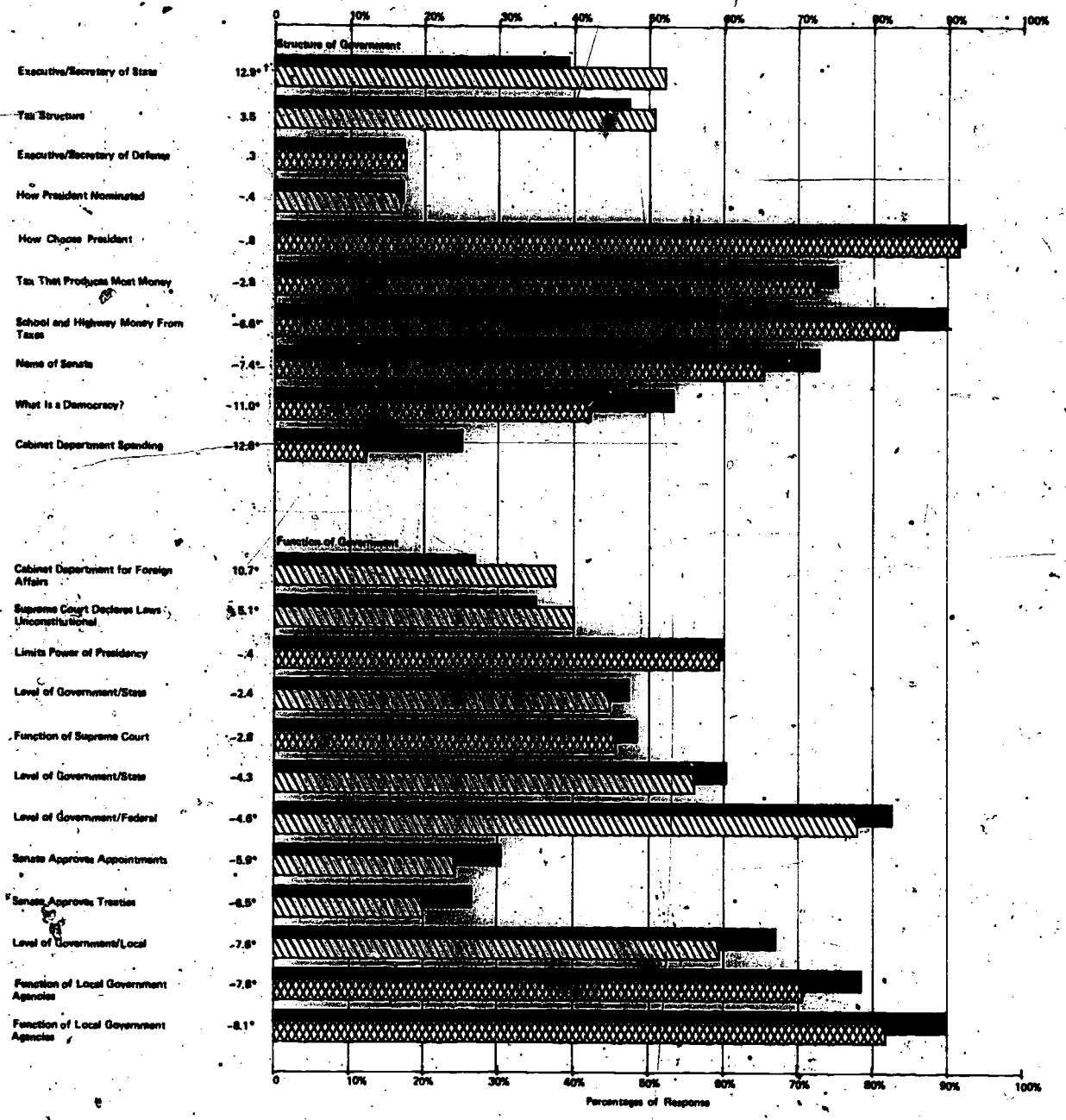
Results for each item included in a content area are displayed graphically in the summary of results for each chapter. A sample graph, showing results for 13-year-olds on the structure and function of government, appears in Figure 1.

On the graph, black bars represent the first assessment of an item; slashed and crosshatched bars depict the second assessment. Crosshatched bars indicate the item is a citizenship item and measures change over six or seven years (from 1969 and 1970 to 1976), while slashed bars show change over a four-year period (from 1972 to 1976). Items are grouped by topic, with those concerning the structure of government at the top of the graph and those about the function of government at the bottom. Within these topics, items are ordered by the change in performance between assessment years, with the largest improvement at the top and the greatest decline at the bottom. The number to the left of each set of bars is the change in performance from the first to the second assessments. Positive numbers indicate an improvement between the first and second assessments; negative numbers signal a decline. Asterisks indicate the difference is significant at the .05 level.

The changes in average performance over the four-, six- and seven-year periods and the number of items used in computing each average appear at the bottom of the graph. Again, asterisks show significance at the .05 level.

Percentages given in the text and in exhibits have been rounded to whole numbers. Subtraction of these numbers may yield a figure that varies slightly from the difference noted on the graphs, since the differences on the graphs have been obtained by subtracting unrounded percentages. In the text, the symbol ★ marks percentages that, when subtracted, will give results slightly different than those shown on the graphs.

FIGURE 1. Sample Graph: Item Percentages of Response and Average Performance Levels on Structure and Function of Government Items for the First and Second Assessments, Age 13



*Asterisk indicates significant difference at the 5% level.
†Change between first and second assessments. Positive numbers indicate an improvement and negative numbers, a decline.

CHAPTER 1

CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

Highlights of the Results

- Thirteen-year-olds' and 17-year-olds' recognition and valuing of their constitutional rights declined slightly from the first to the second assessment.
  - In 1976, 13-year-olds' average performance was 67% on items measuring change over six years — approximately a 2 percentage-point decline from the first assessment — and 64% on items measuring change over four years — representing no significant change from the first assessment.
  - On the average, in 1976, 77% of the 17-year-olds correctly answered questions measuring change over four years — approximately a 2 percentage-point decline from 1972.
- In the 1976 assessment, approximately three-fifths of the 13-year-olds and four-fifths of the 17-year-olds realized that their civil rights are stated in the U.S. Constitution. These figures represent no change from the 1972 assessment results for 13-year-olds and a drop from 1972 performance for 17-year-olds.
- Changes in 13-year-olds' valuing of constitutional rights appeared somewhat dependent on the right in question. For example, those willing to allow someone who did not believe in God to hold a public office declined from 59% to 49%; but those willing to allow a magazine or newspaper to publish criticism of an elected official increased from 49% to 54%.
- In 1976, 17-year-old performance on three items concerning freedom of the press ranged from 60% supporting the freedom to publish mistakes of governmental officials to 75% able to give a reason why libraries should be allowed to have books arguing against democracy. Performance on two of these items declined 6 to 9 percentage points from 1972; results for the third item did not change.

National Assessment objectives distinguish between recognition of constitutional rights and valuing those rights. For instance, a person might know that freedom of the press is guaranteed by the Constitution, but might still feel that criticism of national policies should not be printed. People may not exercise rights of which they are unaware; rights that people do not value may be eroded or unequally applied.

The NAEP assessment asked both whether students recognized fundamental rights and whether they supported them. Figures 2 and 3 show performance on each item measuring recognition and valuing of such rights for 13- and 17-year-olds, respectively, for both assessment years. Since there are very few items for 9-year-olds, no reliable generalizations about 9-year-old performance can be made; results for this age group are discussed with results for specific items.

For 13-year-olds, mean percentages of success did not change significantly on items measuring change over the six-year period, but declined by 2 percentage points on items assessing change over four years. Note that performance improved significantly on one item measuring recognition of constitutional rights and declined significantly on two. Performance on an item about the rights of the accused increased by 20 percentage points; however, this extraordinary change should not unduly influence one's perception of the overall results. Thirteen-year-olds showed a significant improvement on two items about valuing constitutional rights and a significant decline on three. Overall, then, we see a slight decline for 13-year-olds on constitutional rights items.

Performance of 17-year-olds declined on four of six items measuring recognition of constitutional rights. Note that performance did not decline on an item about the right of the accused with respect to evidence collection — the same item on which 13-year-olds showed such a dramatic increase — and an item about limits on the power of the presidency.

Seventeen-year-old average performance on items measuring change over four years (1972 to 1976) declined 2 percentage points, from 79% to 77%. Nearly all of these items dealt with valuing constitutional rights. Performance went up significantly on one item measuring valuing of constitutional rights and declined significantly on three. Taken together, these results indicate a slight decline in 17-year-olds' valuing of constitutional rights.

Recognizing Constitutional Rights: Item Results

What rights are guaranteed by the Constitution? Why do we have these rights?

Three-fifths of the 13-year-olds and four-fifths of the 17-year-olds realized that their civil rights are stated in the Constitution. Exhibit 1 displays the item and national results.

The drop in performance was statistically significant for 17-year-olds but not for 13-year-olds. A substantial improvement in performance did occur between ages 13 and 17. Many 13-year-olds appear to be uncertain about the difference between the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

Most 13- and 17-year-olds were aware of the purpose of the rights included in the Constitution, although their percentages of success dropped somewhat from the first to the second assessment. Seventy-six percent of the 13-year-olds and 91% of the 17-year-olds correctly answered a question about this in the 1976 assessment, compared with 81% at age 13 and 96%* at age 17 in the first assessment.

Three 13-year-old items dealt with knowledge of specific rights insured by the Constitution. Nearly 90% of the 13-year-olds in the 1976 assessment were aware that the right to privacy protects citizens' homes from search without written permission — a slight increase from the 1970 assessment. Fewer 13-year-olds in 1976 than in 1972 — 70% compared to 77%* — selected freedom of religion as a right guaranteed by the Constitution. In fact, in 1976, some 14% felt that the right to a good job was constitutionally guaranteed. Approximately seven in ten 13-year-olds in both 1970 and 1976 realized that one is free to express one's opinions of the government and could give a reason for this freedom.

Three items concerned the rights of the accused. One of these items appears in Exhibit 2.

The increase for 13-year-olds represents the largest increase for all items included in this report.

EXHIBIT 1. Percentages of Response to Item "Civil Rights Stated in Constitution," Ages 13 and 17

If a citizen of the United States wants to find a statement of his civil rights, in which one of the following should he look?

	13-Year-Olds		17-Year-Olds	
	1972	1976	1972	1976
○ In the Bible	1%	1%	+%	1%
● In the Constitution	63	59	85	81*‡
○ In the Articles of Confederation	11	11	6	7
○ In the Declaration of Independence	20	26*	7	9*
○ I don't know.	5	3*	1†	2

+ Indicates rounded percent less than one.
**Indicates significant difference at the .05 level between the first and second assessments.*
†Figures do not total 100% due to rounding.
‡Change is -4.8.

EXHIBIT 2. Percentages of Response to Item "Rights of the Accused," Ages 13 and 17

According to the law, are police allowed to keep an arrested person in jail until they collect the evidence against him, however long that takes?

	13-Year-Olds		17-Year-Olds	
	1970	1976	1969	1976
○ Yes	41%	24%*	11%	9%*
● No	53	73*	88	88‡
○ I don't know.	6	3*	2†	3*

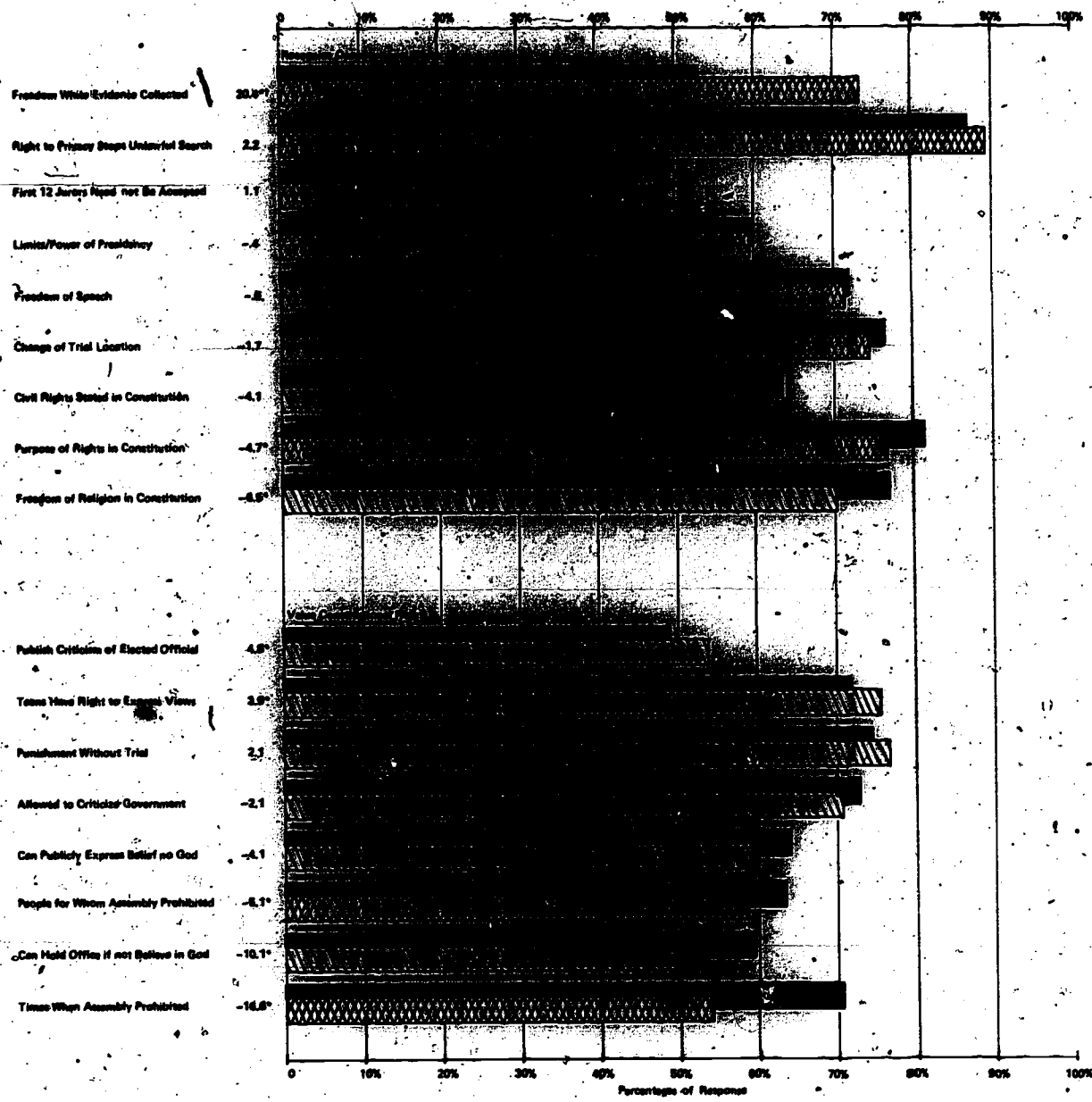
**Indicates significant difference at the .05 level between the first and second assessments.*
†Figures do not total 100% due to rounding.
‡Change is 1.0.

Explanations for the change can only be suppositions; one hypothesis might be that the rising number of television shows about police and lawyers has contributed to 13-year-old improvement in this area.

A second question concerned the right to move a trial to a different location. In 1976, 74% of the 13-year-olds and 79% of the 17-year-olds answered the question correctly. Although 13-year-old performance did not change appreciably, results for 17-year-olds dropped 8 percentage points between the 1969 and 1976 assessments. The third question asked, "In a murder trial, must the first 12 persons called for jury duty be accepted as a jury?" On this item, the difference in 13- and 17-year-old knowledge was considerable. Forty-seven percent of the 13-year-olds and 70% of the 17-year-olds in 1976 answered correctly that the first 12 persons need not be accepted. Thirteen-year-old results again remained the same for both assessments, while 17-year-old performance dropped 10 percentage points.

There were few questions for 9-year-olds about their recognition of constitutional rights. Most 9-year-olds realized that their parents do not have to receive governmental permission to move from state to

FIGURE 2. Item Percentages of Response and Average Performance Levels on Constitutional Rights Items for the First and Second Assessments, Age 13



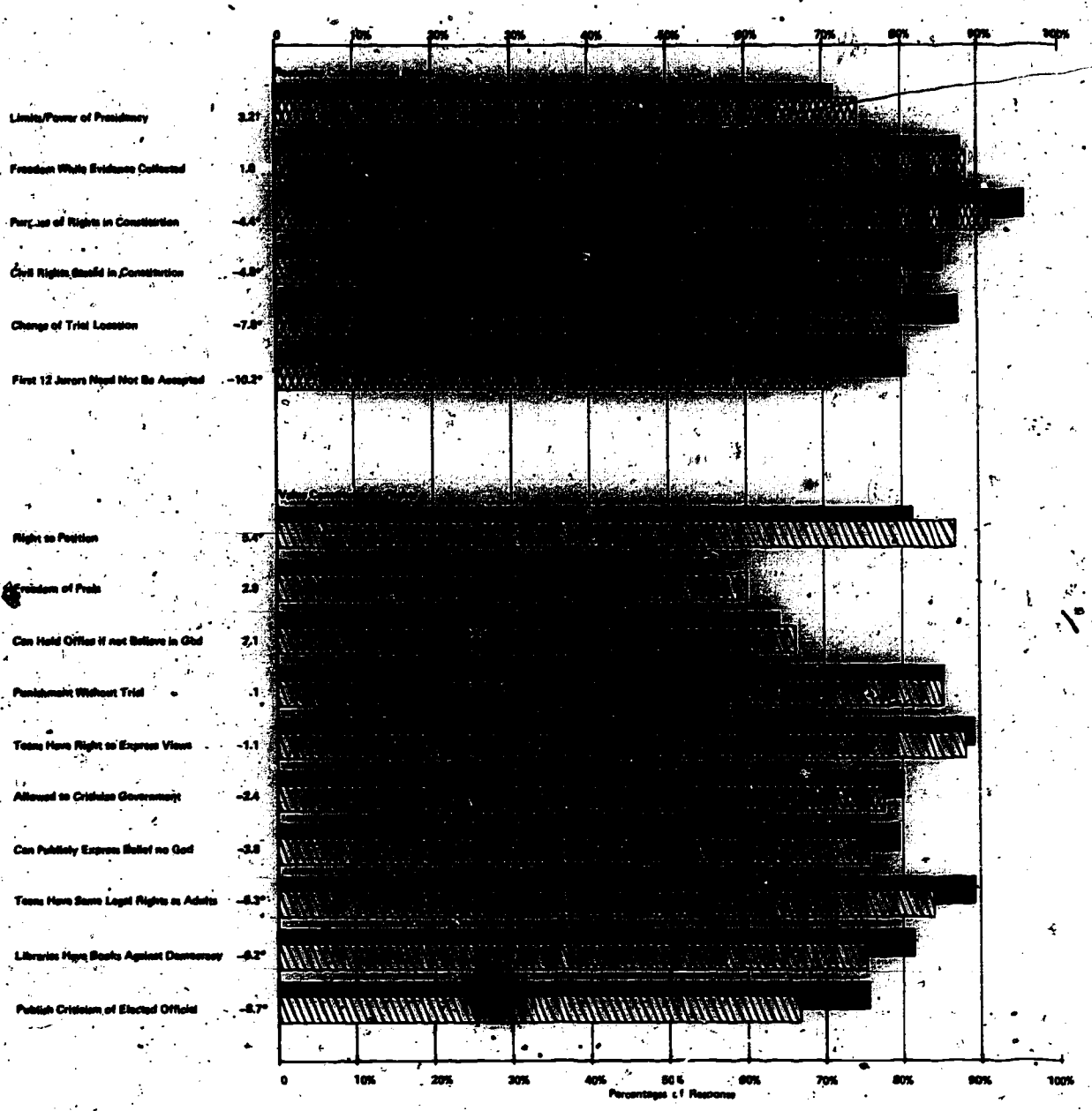
Changes in Average Performance

1970	1976	Change	1972	1976	Change
67.9%	67.1%	-.8	66.4%	64.4%	-2.0*
Number of exercises = 9			Number of exercises = 8		

*Asterisk indicates significant difference at the 5% level.
†Change between first and second assessments. Positive numbers indicate an improvement and negative numbers, a decline.

First assessment of item.
Second assessment of item assessed in 1970 and 1976.
Second assessment of item assessed in 1972 and 1976.

FIGURE 3. Item Percentages of Response and Average Performance Levels on Constitutional Rights Items for the First and Second Assessments, Age 17



*Asterisk indicates significant difference at the 5% level.
†Change between first and second assessments. Positive numbers indicate an improvement and negative numbers, a decline.

state, although only about half could give reasons why this is so. Nine-year-olds were also asked if they were allowed to express their opinion of the government and then asked to give a reason for their answer. Slightly over four-fifths in both 1970 and 1976 recognized they were permitted to express their opinions, but only about half could give reasons for their answers.

Valuing Constitutional Rights: Item Results

Do young Americans value their constitutional rights? Do they recognize that these rights should apply in specific situations? Do they feel that these rights should be extended equally to all?

Most of the items in this section asked if certain situations or rights should exist. If people feel that the activity or right should be permitted, it serves as an indication that they value the underlying right involved. These items primarily emphasize the freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution. None of them were administered to 9-year-olds.

Freedom of the press was an essential element in uncovering the Watergate scandal. But, at least among 17-year-olds, valuing of the freedom of the press did not seem to increase.

About half of the 13-year-olds and about two-thirds of the 17-year-olds believe that the press should have the right to criticize elected officials. This item represents the largest gain on the values items for 13-year-olds and the largest drop for 17-year-olds (Exhibit 3).

Seventeen-year-olds' performance also declined on a second item about freedom of the press. When asked if libraries should have books arguing against democracy, 89% in 1972 and 81% in 1976 marked "yes." A slightly smaller percentage in each assessment — 81% in 1972 and 75% in 1976 — wrote an acceptable reason *why* libraries should be permitted to have such books.

On a third question, regarding publication of mistakes of governmental officials, the 17-year-old percentage of success did not change significantly between assessments. Sixty percent both supported this freedom of the press and gave at least one satisfactory reason for their support.

There was no discernable pattern of change for items concerning freedom of speech. Thirteen-year-olds showed a slight improvement, and 17-year-olds' performance evidenced no significant change when asked if citizens younger than the voting age should be able to write letters to elected officials or to express publicly their political opinions. In 1976, approximately three-fourths of the 13-year-olds and nearly nine-tenths of the 17-year-olds responded that young citizens should have these rights. Neither 13-year-olds nor 17-year-olds displayed a change in performance on an item about one's freedom to

EXHIBIT 3. Percentages of Response to Item "Should a Newspaper Publish Criticism of the Government?" Ages 13 and 17

Should a newspaper or magazine be allowed to publish something that criticizes an elected government official?

	13-Year-Olds		17-Year-Olds	
	1972	1976	1972	1976
● Yes	49%	54%*	75%	67%*‡
○ No	38	27*	14	15
○ Undecided	12†	19*	10†	17*†

**Indicates significant difference at the .05 level between the first and second assessments.*
†Figures do not total 100% due to rounding.
‡Change is -8.7.

speak on political issues. Seventy-one percent of the 13-year-olds and 78% of the 17-year-olds supported this freedom and gave an acceptable reason for their support.

Should a person who believes there is no God be allowed to express his views publicly? This question touches upon both freedom of speech and freedom of religion, so students may have been responding to either freedom, or both. Sixty percent at age 13 and 76% at age 17 supported these freedoms in 1976; performance did not change significantly for either age group over the four-year period. Substantial percentages in the 1976 assessment — 18% of the 13-year-olds and 16% of the 17-year-olds — were undecided as to whether these freedoms should be allowed.

Approximately two-thirds of the 17-year-olds in both 1972 and 1976 felt that a person who did not believe in God should be allowed to hold public office. However, for 13-year-olds, the percentage feeling that this situation should be allowed dropped sharply, from 59% in 1972 to 49% in 1976. Twenty-seven percent of the 13-year-olds were "undecided" on this question in 1976, as were 16% of the 17-year-olds.

Support for freedom of assembly was investigated only at the 13-year-old level; the results are not particularly encouraging. The percentage giving acceptable reasons for either supporting or rejecting the right to assemble in all situations dropped 17 percentage points — from 71% to 54%. The percentage giving acceptable reasons for permitting or not permitting various kinds of people to assemble also declined, although not as greatly — performance dropped 5 percentage points, to 58%.

Both 13- and 17-year-olds seemed to support the application of fair trial procedures, and this support remained constant from 1972 to 1976. In the second assessment, 77% of the 13-year-olds and 85% of the 17-year-olds stated that crimes should not be punished immediately after an accusation is made and gave an acceptable justification for their answer.

CHAPTER 2

RESPECT FOR OTHERS

Highlights of the Results

- Overall results for 13- and 17-year-olds on items in this chapter showed a slight decline.
  - Thirteen-year-olds' average performance on items assessed in 1970 and again in 1976 declined approximately 3 percentage points, to 65%.
  - Over the seven-year period, 17-year-olds' average performance declined from 82% to 80%. On items measuring change over four years, their performance declined from 78% to 76%.
- Thirteen-year-olds showed the greatest improvement between assessments in explaining why laws are needed — 63% answered acceptably in the 1970 assessment compared to 81% in 1976.
- Thirteen-year-olds' performance declined most in supporting freedom of peaceable assembly in all legal situations — dropping 17 percentage points to 54% — and in explaining how society benefits from universal education — declining 22 percentage points to 51%.
- Seventeen-year-olds improved most from the first to the second assessments in willingness to have persons of other races participate in various activities, such as living in their neighborhood or voting in elections.
- Between 1972 and 1976, 17-year-olds improved in their understanding of a problem facing poor people, with 90% answering acceptably in the first assessment and 93%* doing so in the second.

Respect for others can be manifested in many ways. It may find expression in supporting the rights of others, in willingness to help others, in upholding the rule of law, in supporting open communication or in believing in equal opportunity for all.

Figures 4 and 5 demonstrate that for both 13- and 17-year-olds, respectively, the number of items in this content area showing significant declines was greater than the number displaying significant improvements. Average performance on these items also declined significantly at both age levels. For 13-year-olds, performance declined approximately 3 percentage points on eight items measuring change between the 1970 and 1976 assessments. Seventeen-year-olds' performance declined about 2 percentage points over both the four- and seven-year periods.

As Figure 4 reveals, 13-year-olds improved in their ability to explain why laws are needed, but declined in support for freedom of assembly in all legal situations and in understanding of the benefits of universal education to society. Seventeen-year-olds (Figure 5) showed greater willingness in the second than in the first assessment to associate with people of other races and improved in their ability to understand some of the problems of poor people. Items on which their performance declined dealt with varied topics.

Respect for Others: Item Results

Respect for others includes respect for people of all races. As part of the assessment, students were asked if they would be willing to have a person of another race participate in activities typically encountered in daily life — for example, live in their neighborhood, vote in elections or attend their church. Exhibit 4 shows such an item. Willingness was slightly higher for situations allowing a greater distance between people — voting in national elections and attending one's church or synagogue. Students were least willing to have someone of another race live in their neighborhood; however, in 1976, close to 80% at both ages 13 and 17 were willing to accept this situation. The percentage of those willing to have someone of another race do all five things listed did not change significantly between the first and second assessments for 13-year-olds, but this percentage improved by 7 points for 17-year-olds.

On a similar, unreleased, item, the same trends were apparent. Students were more likely to be willing to have people of other races participate in activities that were not close social encounters, although for both ages willingness did not drop below 75% on any situation. Again, the percentage of 13-year-olds willing to accept someone of a different race in all five situations given did not change significantly; but the percentage of 17-year-olds willing to do so increased by 8 percentage points.

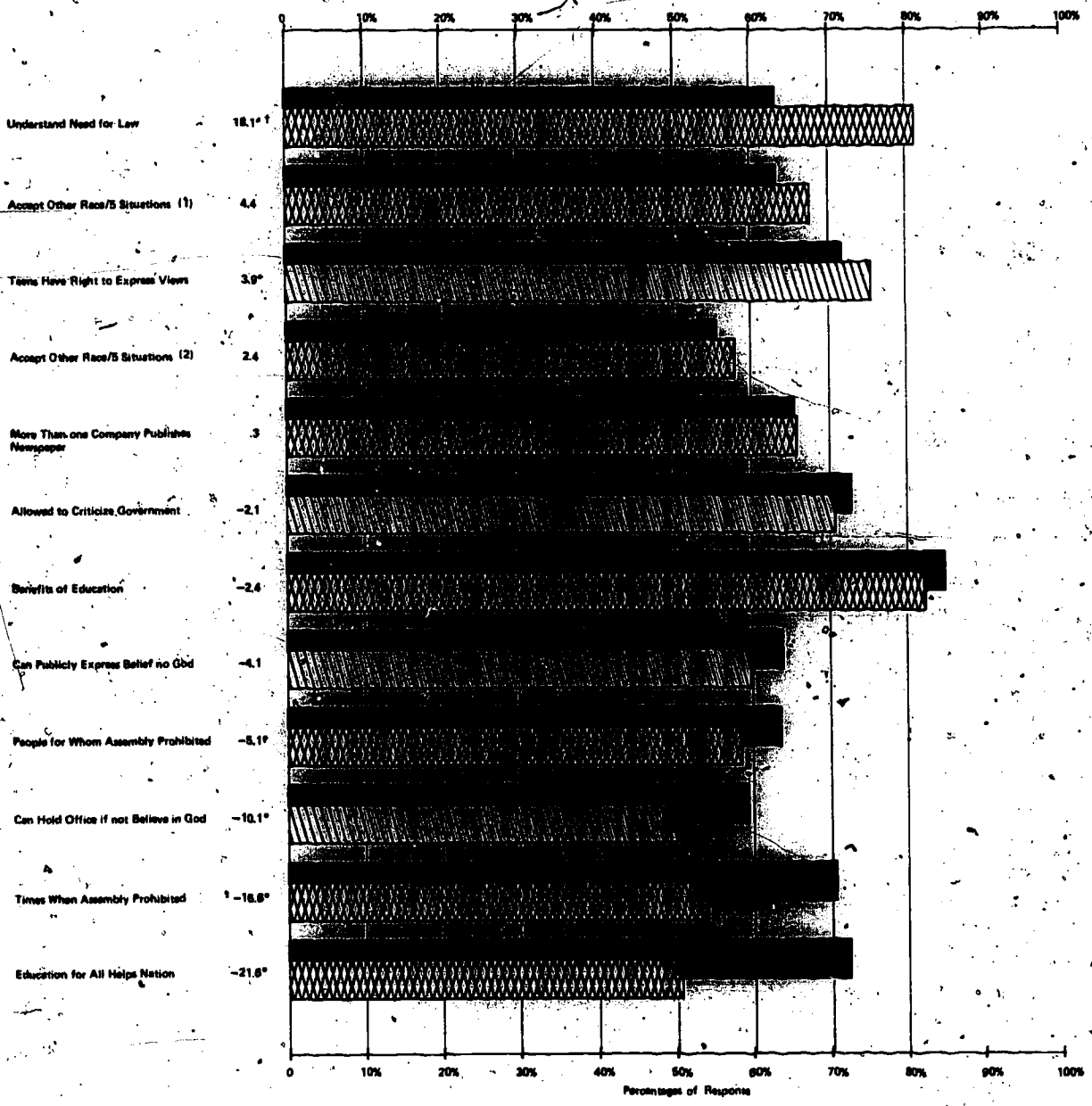
Seventeen-year-olds also demonstrated increased understanding of some of the problems faced by people living in poor neighborhoods. Approximately 90% in 1972 and 93%* in 1976 could give a reason why people living in inadequate housing do not simply move to better neighborhoods. Many responses mentioned the probable lack of funds faced by people living in such conditions. Other acceptable responses included their probable lack of education and the possibility that they might face various types of discrimination.

Respect for others is also indicated by willingness to support for all people the rights guaranteed by the Constitution. Some of the items discussed in the chapter on "Constitutional Rights" are also included in the summaries for this chapter and will be discussed briefly here.

In the 1976 assessment, 13-year-olds' results on five items about valuing such rights as freedom of speech, religion and assembly ranged from 54% to 76%. From the first to the second assessments, performance improved on supporting freedom of expression for teenagers, did not change significantly on allowing people to express a belief in atheism, and declined on items about freedom of assembly and freedom of religion for elected officials. Seventeen-year-olds' performance on four such items varied from 66% to 88% in 1976. Their achievement on these items generally did not change appreciably from the first assessment.

Questions to 9-year-olds about their respect for others involved their willingness to act in a personal situation. When asked if they would help a best friend who was hurt, even if it meant they would be late to school, 95% in 1976 said they would help their friend and gave an acceptable method. This percentage represented a slight (about 2 points) decline from 1972. The number of 9-year-olds who had actually

FIGURE 4. Item Percentages of Response and Average Performance Levels on Respect for Others Items for the First and Second Assessments, Age 13



Changes in Average Performance

1970	1976	Change	1972	1976	Change
67.3%	64.7%	-2.6*	Insufficient number of exercises		

Number of exercises = 8

Asterisk indicates significant difference at the 5% level.

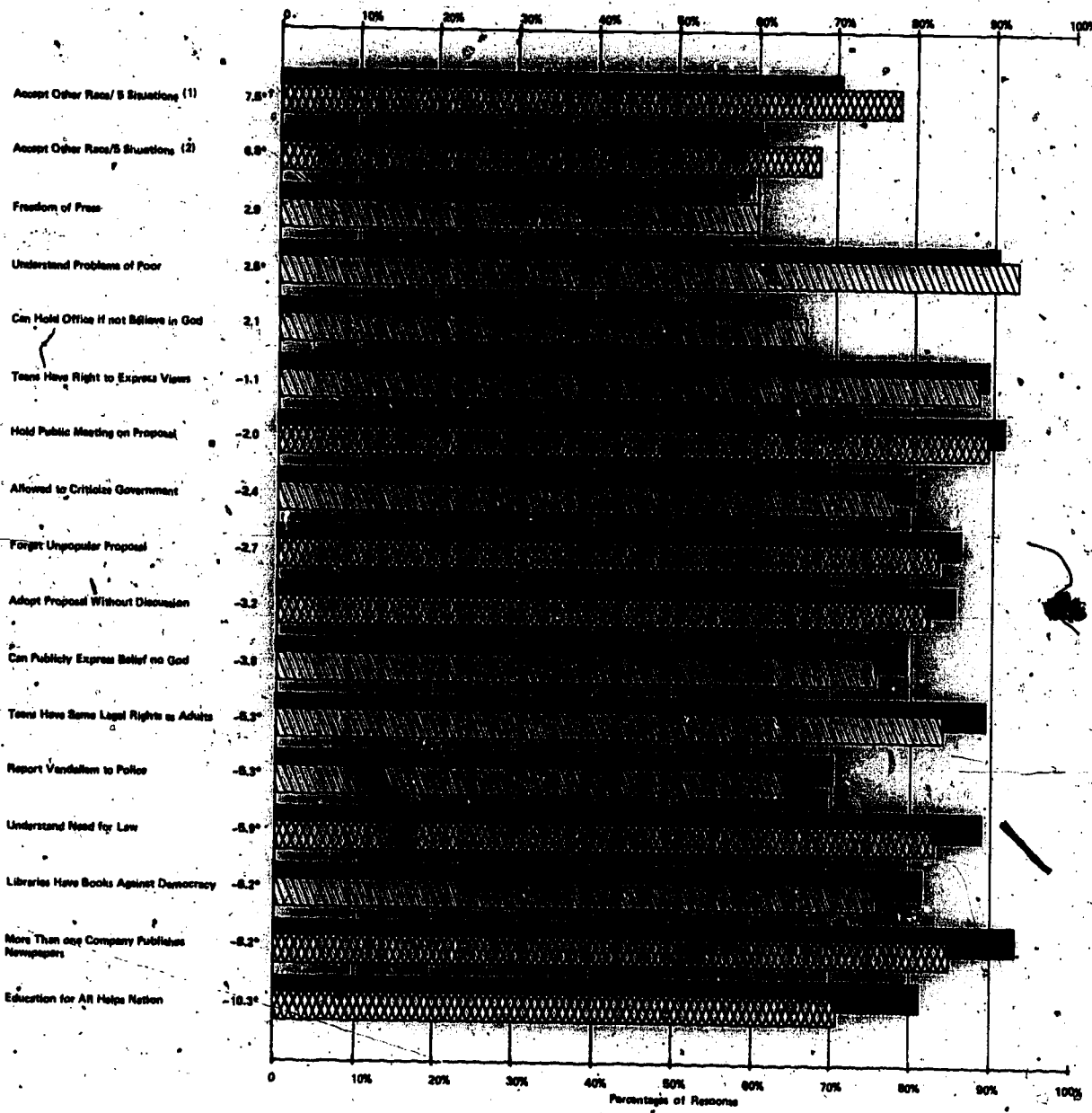
†*Change between first and second assessments. Positive numbers indicate an improvement and negative numbers, a decline.*

First assessment of item.

Second assessment of item assessed in 1970 and 1976.

Second assessment of item assessed in 1972 and 1976.

URE 5. Item Percentages of Response and Average Performance Levels on Respect for Others Items for the First and Second Assessments, Age 17



*Asterisk indicates significant difference at the 5% level.
†Change between first and second assessments. Positive numbers indicate an improvement and negative numbers a decline.

helped an adult within the last year — other than their family or teacher, and without pay — dropped from 67% in 1970 to 48% in 1976.

Many teenagers in 1976 understood the need for laws, with 81% of the 13-year-olds and 83% of the 17-year-olds giving at least three acceptable reasons why laws are needed. Thirteen-year-olds' ability to give such reasons showed a large — 18 percentage point — improvement from 1970. Seventeen-year-old performance, however, showed a decline of 6 percentage points from 1969. Thirteen-year-olds were more likely to cite prevention of specific crimes as a reason for having laws while the older teenagers tended to make more general statements.

EXHIBIT 4. Percentages of Response to Item "Respect for Others," Ages 13 and 17

People feel differently toward people of other races. How willing would you be to have a person of a different race doing these things?

	13-Year-Olds		17-Year-Olds	
	1970	1976	1969	1976
A. Be your barber or beauty operator.				
● Willing to	80%	82%	79%	86%*
○ Prefer not to				
B. Come to your church or synagogue.				
● Willing to	86	88	90	92
○ Prefer not to				
C. Live in your neighborhood.				
● Willing to	77	81	75	79
○ Prefer not to				
D. Sit beside you on a train or bus.				
● Willing to	78	78	86	87
○ Prefer not to				
E. Vote in national elections.				
● Willing to	87	86	95	94
○ Prefer not to				
Percentage willing to have person of another race do all five things listed above.	56	58	61	68*

Indicates significant difference at the .05 level between the first and second assessments.

Seventeen-year-old support for laws was also measured by asking them what they would do in the hypothetical situation described in Exhibit 5.

The proportion of 17-year-olds who said they would report vandalism to the police dropped 7 percentage points between 1972 and 1976; the percentage giving an acceptable reason for their answer went down by 5 percentage points. About half of the "acceptable" responses included preventing further crime, doing one's duty as a citizen and, if one responded "no" to the first question, notifying someone other than the police.

Nine-year-olds answered two questions about rules — one about rules for themselves and another about rules for grownups. Over 90% of the 9-year-olds could explain why they needed rules. While 88% felt that grownups also needed rules, only two-thirds could explain why. These percentages did not change significantly between 1970 and 1976.

Several items concerned the need for open communication by public officials and the media. Students at all three ages were asked why it might be good to have newspapers in a particular area published by more than one company. Ability to give reasons increased with age; in 1976, slightly under one-third of the 9-year-olds, about two-thirds of the 13-year-olds and 85% of the 17-year-olds gave an acceptable reason. While performance from the first to the second assessment remained constant for 13-year-olds, it dropped 8 to 9 percentage points for 9- and 17-year-olds. Most respondents either indicated that different papers might present different points of view on the same story or said that more papers might cover a wider range of news items. As one 13-year-old put it, "because the news will be different, and told different."

Seventeen-year-olds considered various ways school board members could deal with an unpopular plan. Nearly 90% agreed that the plan should be discussed at a public meeting; slightly over 80% agreed that shelving the plan because it was unpopular or adopting it without public discussion were not good courses of action. No significant changes in results on these questions occurred between the first and second assessments.

Several items about constitutional rights also relate to the concept of open communication. As observed in Chapter 1, 17-year-olds were somewhat less likely in 1976 than in 1969 to believe that li-

EXHIBIT 5. Percentages of Response to Item "Report Vandalism," Age 17

	1971	1976
A. Suppose you see a stranger slashing the tires of a car. Would you report and describe that person to the police?		
○ Yes	74%	67%*
○ No	14	10*
○ Undecided	12	22*†
B. Please give a reason for your answer.		
Percentage giving acceptable reasons.	70	65*

**Indicates significant difference at the .05 level between the first and second assessments.*
†Figures do not total 100% due to rounding.

braries should have books that speak against democracy, 81% believing so in 1969 compared to 75% in 1976. Approximately the same percentages in the first and second assessments – 71% of the 13-year-olds and 78% of the 17-year-olds – felt that people should be allowed to criticize the government publicly, and about three-fifths of the 17-year-olds in both assessment years felt that the media should be able to publicize the mistakes of governmental officials.

Students appeared aware of the benefits of education for individuals but had difficulty in articulating the benefits to the society when all citizens are educated. In 1976, 70% of the 9-year-olds and 82% of the 13-year-olds gave two or more reasons why education is good for children – approximately the same percentages as in 1970. However, when asked to list two ways the country would be helped if everyone received a good education, the percentage of 13-year-olds answering successfully dropped 22* points, from 72% to 51%, and 17-year-old performance declined 10 percentage points, from 81% to 71%.

CHAPTER 3

STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF GOVERNMENT

Highlights of the Results

- Knowledge about the structure and function of government declined from the early to the mid-seventies for both 13- and 17-year-olds. The decline was greater for 17-year-olds than for 13-year-olds.
  - Thirteen-year-olds' performance averaged 58% in 1976 on six-year change items – a decline of approximately 5 percentage points from the 1970 assessment.
  - Seventeen-year-olds' average performance declined 10 percentage points – from 64% to 54% – on items assessed in 1969 and 1976 and 5 percentage points – from 62% to 57% – on items assessed in 1972 and 1976.
- The percentages of students able to explain the basic concept of democracy went down from the first to the second assessment. Thirteen-year-olds' performance dropped 11 percentage points – from 53% to 42% – while that of 17-year-olds declined 13* points – from 86% to 74%. Less than 3% of the 9-year-olds successfully explained democracy in either year.
- Knowledge about the limitations of the power of the presidency did not increase. About 60% of the 13-year-olds and slightly over 70% of the 17-year-olds in both assessment years could either explain why the President does not have unlimited power or cite situations in which unlimited powers do exist.
- Items about the U.S. Department of State showed a definite improvement between assessment years for 13-year-olds. Seventeen-year-old performance improved considerably on one such item and showed no change on another.
- Knowledge about the U.S. Congress – specifically, ability to identify the U.S. Senate and to recognize some of its functions – underwent a sizeable decline. In the 1976 assessment, 65% of the 13-year-olds and 88% of the 17-year-olds identified the Senate as one of the two parts of the Congress, a decline of 6 to 7 percentage points from their performance in the first assessment. Less than 30% of the 13-year-olds in either assessment year identified the Senate as the body that approves treaties and ratifies appointments. While nearly half the 17-year-olds in 1976 knew that the Senate ratified appointments, only 35% realized that it also approves treaties. Results on these items for 17-year-olds declined 10 to 16 percentage points from the first assessment.

The National Assessment objectives in citizenship and social studies imply that citizens of a democracy need to know how their government is organized and how it functions in order to elect representatives intelligently and to monitor the government's activities. For the purpose of the assessment, knowledge about government was divided into two parts: knowledge about the way the government is set up and knowledge about how its various parts function. In the United States, parallel structures exist on each of three levels — the federal, state and local levels. At each level, functions are allocated among the legislative, executive and judicial branches.

Assessment questions about the structure of government concentrated upon the federal level, since variations from the federal structure at the state and local levels were felt, for the most part, to be outside the scope of a nationwide assessment.

The majority of the items assessing understanding of the structure of government are from the citizenship assessment; thus, they cover a six-year period for 13-year-olds and a seven-year period for 17-year-olds. Most of the items concerned with the function of government are from the social studies assessment and measure changes in performance over a four-year period.

The graphs in Figures 6 and 7 show the national percentage of success for each item for each year in which it was administered. These graphs display only results for 13- and 17-year-olds, respectively; since there were very few items for 9-year-olds, results for that age group will be presented with results for specific items.

Figures 6 and 7 reveal that percentages declined on the majority of the items about the structure and function of government at both ages. Thirteen-year-olds' performance improved on three items, two of which concerned the State Department. During 1972, the secretary of state was William P. Rogers, while in 1976 it was Henry Kissinger — a considerably more visible figure. This may have contributed to the improvement in performance.

Mean performance for 13-year-olds dropped approximately 5 percentage points on items measuring change from the 1970 to the 1976 assessment, but remained the same on items assessed in the 1972 and 1976 school years. Since more items showed significant declines than significant improvements, we can say that the achievement of 13-year-olds with regard to the structure and function of government probably declined.

Seventeen-year-olds' mean performance went down 10 percentage points — from 64% to 54% — on items spanning seven years, and 5 percentage points — from 62% to 57% — on four-year change items. Their achievement went up on only one item — one of the items about the State Department. All indicators point to a fairly substantial decline in 17-year-old understanding of the structure and function of government. The decline in their knowledge about the structure of government appeared greater than the drop in knowledge about its functioning.

Structure of Government: Item Results

For a more detailed picture of student abilities and of changes in their performance, we will discuss many of the items displayed on the graphs in Figures 6 and 7. Items about the structure of government asked about the makeup of the three branches of our governmental system and about the tax structure.

As a measure of knowledge about the underlying structure of American government, 9-, 13- and 17-year-olds were asked, "What is a democracy?" The majority of acceptable responses at all ages either stated that the people control the government or that voting is used to run the government — for example, "A democracy is a government where the people vote for their leaders." Other acceptable responses included references to freedom or equality for all or to the Constitution or the Declaration of Independence. Students were not required to give complex explanations of the concept of democracy. Answers such as "run by the people," "where the majority rules" and "it's freedom of what you say and do" were scored as acceptable.

Nine-year-olds' capacity to define democracy seemed very low in both assessment years: fewer than 3% of them successfully explained the concept in either 1970 or 1976. Thirteen-year-olds' performance dropped 11 percentage points — from 53% to 42% — while that of 17-year-olds declined 13* percentage points — from 86% to 74%. From these results, we can see that familiarity with the concept of democra-

FIGURE 6.
Structu

Executive/Secretary of State	12.8*†
Tax Structure	3.5
Executive/Secretary of Defense	.3
How President Nominated	-.4
How Choose President	-.8
Tax That Produces Most Money	-2.3
School and Highway Money From Taxes	-6.8*
Name of Senate	-7.4*
What Is a Democracy?	-11.0*
Cabinet Department Spending	-12.8*

Cabinet Department for Foreign Affairs	10.7*
Supreme Court Declares Laws Unconstitutional	8.1*
Limits Power of Presidency	-.4
Level of Government/State	-2.4
Function of Supreme Court	-2.8*
Level of Government/State	-4.3
Level of Government/Federal	-4.8*
Senate Approves Appointments	-5.9*
Senate Approves Treaties	-6.8*
Level of Government/Local	-7.8*
Function of Local Government Agencies	-7.9*
Function of Local Government Agencies	-8.1*

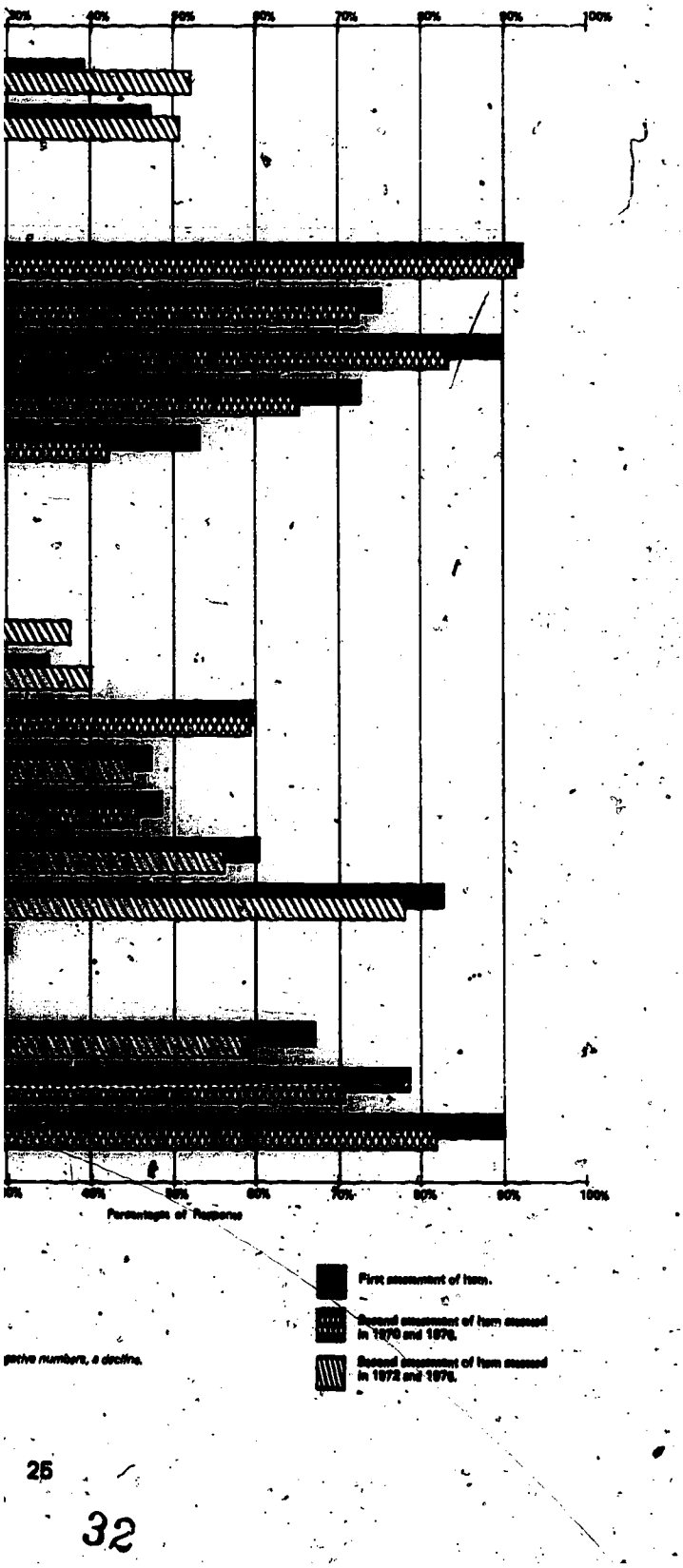
Changes in Average Performance

1972	1976	Change	1972	1976
63.7%	[illegible]	-3.4*	[illegible]	[illegible]

Number of exercises: 11   Number of exercis[illegible]

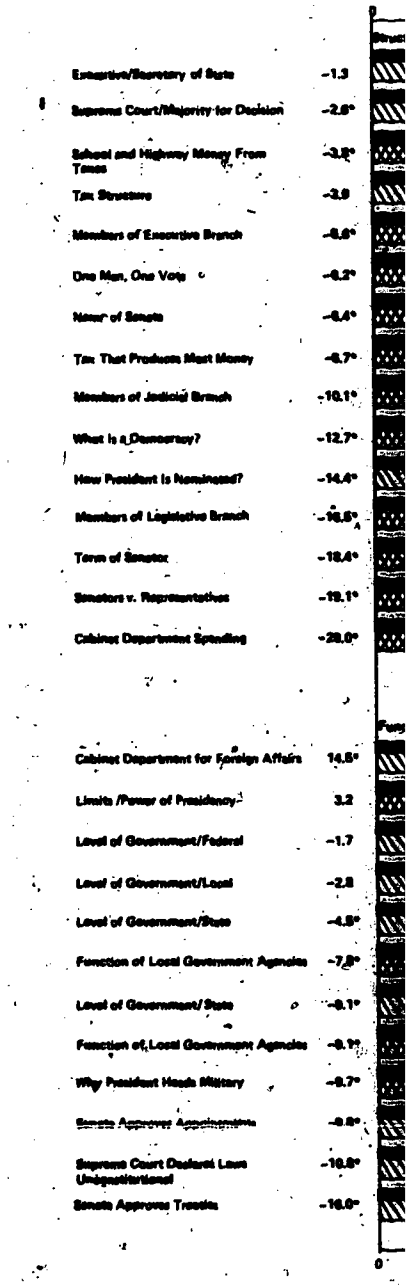
*Asterisk indicates significant difference at the 5% l[illegible]
†Change between first and second assessments. Posi[illegible]

sponse and Average Performance Levels on
ssment Items for the First and Second
ments, Age 13



ative numbers, a decline.

FIGURE 7. It
Structure



*Asterisk indicates significant difference at the 5% level.
†Change between first and second assessments. Positive n

Performance Levels on the First and Second

cy increased considerably from age 13 to age 17, but that between the first and second assessments ability to explain the concept had declined about equally at both ages.

A series of questions probed for knowledge about the legislative branch of the government. An item about the Congress appears in Exhibit 6. Thirteen- and 17-year-olds showed a very similar decline in performance on this item — a drop of 7 percentage points for 13-year-olds and 6 percentage points for 17-year-olds. There was, however, a considerable improvement from ages 13 to 17 — while about two-thirds of the 13-year-olds in 1976 correctly identified the Senate as part of the Congress, almost nine-tenths of the 17-year-olds did so.

Seventeen-year-olds were vague on the principles governing allocation of senators and representatives at the federal and the state level. When asked to identify a situation in which a state might have more senators than representatives, 54% in 1969, but only 35% in 1976, correctly responded that this situation would occur when a state has a small population. When questioned about the groups that would have fewer legislators when state legislatures are apportioned by the "one-man/one-vote" rule, approximately one-third of the 17-year-olds in 1969 and one-quarter seven years later correctly replied that farmers would lose legislators.

Seventeen-year-olds were also asked to identify the branch of government to which various public offices belonged. Fewer 17-year-olds in the second assessment recognized that Congress was part of the legislative branch — 74% answered correctly in 1976 compared to 84% in 1969. Identification of the branch to which a state assembly belonged proved more difficult. Fifty-four percent in 1976 correctly identified it as belonging to the legislative branch — a decline of 15 percentage points from 1969. A substantial 22% in 1976 replied "I don't know" to this question.

Performance also declined on identification of offices belonging to the executive branch. In 1976, 71% of the 17-year-olds identified the President, 55% a governor and 38% the U.S. Cabinet as parts of the executive branch. These figures represent 7 to 13 percentage point drops from performance in 1969.

Other questions about the executive branch concerned Cabinet-level departments. On a question about the secretary of state's membership in the President's Cabinet, 13-year-olds' performance improved by 13 percentage points while that of 17-year-olds

EXHIBIT 6. Percentages of Response to Item "Structure of the U.S. Congress," Ages 13 and 17

The Congress of the United States is made up of two parts. One part is the House of Representatives. What is the other part?

	13-Year-Olds		17-Year-Olds	
	1970	1976	1969	1976
○ The Assembly	3%	2%	1%	1%
○ The Electoral College	2	1*	1	1
● The Senate	73	65*‡	94	88*
○ The State Department	3	4	1	1*
○ The Supreme Court	16	21*	4	8*
○ I don't know.	3	6*†	+†	1*

+ indicates rounded percent less than one.
**Indicates significant difference at the .05 level between the first and second assessments.*
†Figures do not total 100% due to rounding.
‡Change is -7.4.

did not change significantly. However, on a question that concerned U.S. Department of Defense expenditures, 13-year-olds' performance dropped by 13 percentage points, and 17-year-olds' performance dropped by 28 percentage points.

In 1969, 74% of the 17-year-olds correctly said that the U.S. Supreme Court was part of the judicial branch; 85% recognized that a county court was part of the judiciary. In 1976, these figures had dropped to 65% correctly placing the Supreme Court and 80% the county court.

Seventeen-year-olds were also asked what proportion of the Supreme Court must agree in order to declare a law unconstitutional. Very few selected the correct answer to this question correctly either time it was assessed — 9% replied that a simple majority was needed during the 1969 assessment and 7% gave this answer in 1976. The largest percentage of students during both years felt that a two-thirds vote by the Supreme Court members was necessary.

In addition to items on the branches of government, several questions concerned the tax structure. Students at all three ages were asked where the money to build schools and highways came from. The number that could answer this question correctly declined at all three ages. Forty-seven percent of the 9-year-olds, 90% of the 13-year-olds and 97% of the 17-year-olds gave acceptable responses in the first assessment, while 42%, 83% and 93% of these groups, respectively, gave acceptable answers in 1976.

Students were more likely to recognize that income tax supplies the most money to run the federal government when "sales tax" appeared last in a list of suggested money sources. On this item, approximately 75% of the teenagers in 1976 correctly saw income tax as the greatest source, and only 10% selected sales tax. However, on a variation of the question, in which "sales tax" appeared first on the list of alternative answers, percentages answering "income tax" in 1976 were 51% at age 13 and 56% at age 17, and approximately 25% at each age chose "sales tax" as the correct answer. In most cases, performance on these items did not change between the first and second assessments.

Function of Government: Item Results

What does the State Department do? Who declares laws unconstitutional? What are the powers of the President? Questions about the function of government examined the differing functions of federal, state and local governments, the powers and duties of governmental bodies and the responsibilities of some local governmental agencies.

Students were asked to indicate the level of government — federal, state or local — responsible for four different governmental functions. Percentages of success for each of the four questions are shown on the graphs in Figures 6 and 7. The percentages of students correctly answering all four questions went down both for 13-year-olds and 17-year-olds, dropping 4 points at age 13 and 10 points at age 17.

Performance also declined on two items about functions of the Senate. Exhibit 7 displays one of these items and its national results.

In 1976, approximately 6% fewer 13-year-olds and 10% fewer 17-year-olds recognized that the Senate must approve appointments to the Supreme Court.

Thirteen- and 17-year-olds were also asked which body had the power to approve treaties. In 1972, 26% at age 13 and 51% at age 17 correctly stated that the Senate has this power; but by 1976, only 20% at 13 and 35% at 17 responded correctly.

We might expect that, after the revelations of Watergate, students would be much more knowledgeable about limits to the power of the presidency. However, it is still the case that fewer students can give reasons why there are limits than know that such limits exist. Exhibit 8 shows another exercise, dealing with the power of the presidency. This exercise was administered to 9-year-olds as well as 13- and 17-year-olds.

Acceptable reasons for a "no" answer could refer to the control of the voters, the system of constitutional checks and balances, the necessity to obey

EXHIBIT 7. Percentages of Response to Item "Approval of U.S. Supreme Court Appointment," Ages 13 and 17

Which one of the following must approve an appointment to the United States Supreme Court?

	13-Year-Olds		17-Year-Olds	
	1972	1976	1972	1976
● The Senate	30%	24%*	58%	48%*
○ The Department of State	5	5	3	2
○ The Department of Justice	37	50*	21	31*
○ The governors of the states	9	9	2	3
○ I don't know.	19	12*	16	15†

**Indicates significant difference at the .05 level between the first and second assessments.*
†Figures do not total 100% due to rounding.

laws or the consequences that might follow a lifting of restraints. The only acceptable reason for a "yes" answer was a national emergency or national disaster.

Although 17-year-olds in 1976 were more likely to recognize that the President cannot do anything he wants, their ability to give reasons why his powers are limited did not increase significantly. Thirteen-year-olds' perception of the President's rights and their ability to give reasons for such rights did not change greatly over six years. At age 9, both recognition of limitations on the President's power and acceptable reasons for these restraints occurred less often in 1976.

"Why is the President, not a military officer, the head of our Armed Forces?" The majority of the 17-year-olds did not answer this question acceptably, and the percentage of those who did decreased from 1969 to 1976. Forty percent gave an acceptable answer the first time, compared to 31%★ in 1976. Acceptable response categories were: to prevent the possibility of a military takeover, to represent the opinion of the voters, to provide supervision of all branches of the armed forces, to consider many aspects of a situation and to save time and allow for coordination of effort.

Another question about the executive branch asked, "Which one of the following governmental departments is MOST concerned with foreign affairs?" Alternatives given were the U.S. Departments of State, Commerce, Agriculture or Treasury. In 1972, 27% of the 13-year-olds and 38% of the 17-year-olds correctly selected the State Department. By 1976, 37% of the 13-year-olds and 53% of the 17-year-olds gave the correct answer — an increase in performance of 11★ percentage points for the 13-year-olds and 14★ points for the older students.

A question about the judicial branch focused on the federal level. Thirteen- and 17-year-olds were asked to identify the body having the power to declare an act of Congress unconstitutional. Thirteen-year-old performance improved from 1972 to 1976, with 40% answering correctly in 1976 compared to 35% in the first assessment. Approximately one-fourth of the 13-year-olds in both years felt that the President could declare congressional acts unconstitutional. For 17-year-olds, performance declined, with 73% answering correctly in the first assessment and 62% doing so in the second.

Approximately three-quarters of the 9-year-olds in both 1972 and 1976 were able to identify the judge, rather than the lawyer, the jury or the person on trial, as the person responsible for insuring that a trial is fair and follows the rules.

Knowledge about the functions of local governmental agencies varied considerably. For example, nearly all 13-year-olds could name the proper agency

EXHIBIT 8. Percentages of Response to Item "Powers of the President," Ages 9, 13 and 17

A. Does the President have the right to do anything affecting the United States that he wants to do?

1970	9-Year-Olds 1970	9-Year-Olds 1976	13-Year-Olds 1970	13-Year-Olds 1976	17-Year-Olds 1969	17-Year-Olds 1976
○ Yes	46%	51%*	23%	23%	20%	10%*
● No	49	42*	72	74	79	87*
○ I don't know.	4†	7*	5†	3*	1	3*

B. (If Yes to A) Why?

C. (If No to A) Why Not?

Percentage Giving Either Yes or No to Part A and an Acceptable Reason in Parts B or C

9-Year-Olds 1970	9-Year-Olds 1976	13-Year-Olds 1970	13-Year-Olds 1976	17-Year-Olds 1969	17-Year-Olds 1976
33	21*	60	59‡	71	74

** Indicates significant difference at the .05 level between the first and second assessments.*
† Figures do not total 100% due to rounding.
‡ Change is -0.4.

to contact if someone was robbed, hurt or sick; and percentages of success did not change significantly over a six-year span. However, the percentages of success in identifying agencies to help one find a babysitter or to obtain assistance for a traveler in a strange town dropped by 13 to 14 percentage points for 13-year-olds from the first to the second assessment. Seventeen-year-olds were less likely in 1976 than in 1969 to name the agency to be contacted if a traffic light was not working or if the public health was endangered.

CHAPTER 4

THE POLITICAL PROCESS

Highlights of the Results

- Thirteen- and 17-year-olds' performance on items concerning the political process declined between the first and second assessments.
  - From the 1970 to the 1976 assessment, 13-year-olds's average results dropped 4 percentage points, from 63% to 59%. The number of items measuring changes between 1972 and 1976 was relatively small; however, average performance did show a decline.
  - Seventeen-year-olds' average results on items assessed in 1969 and 1976 declined 6 percentage points, from 65% to 59%. Only a small number of items measured change between 1972 and 1976; however, average performance on these items did decline.
- Fewer 17-year-olds in 1976 than 1969 reported that they had participated in the political process.
- Nearly all of the 13- and 17-year-olds in both assessment years could name the President of the United States.
- Knowledge about congressional representatives declined from the first to the second assessment. Awareness that a senator is elected dropped 10 percentage points for 13-year-olds — from 74% to 64% — and 9 percentage points for 17-year-olds — from 90% to 81%. Seventeen-year-olds' ability to identify one of their congressional representatives dropped 9 percentage points, from 57% to 48%. About one-fifth of the 13-year-olds in both years could name at least one senator or congressperson from their home state.
- Slightly over half the 17-year-olds in 1976 felt they could have an influence on their local or national government. The percentage feeling they could influence their local government declined from 1969 to 1976 while the percentage feeling they could influence the national government increased.

The American political process involves selecting governmental officials and influencing governmental activities. Many educators feel that good citizenship involves not only a willingness to participate, but also an understanding of effective ways to participate in the political process.

Three major aspects of the political process were examined. These were: attitudes toward participation in the political process, understanding of the electoral process and recognition of governmental officials.

Figures 8 and 9 display results for items relating to the political process. Again, results for 9-year-olds are discussed with results for specific items. Means show an overall drop in results for both 13- and 17-year-olds. This decline is not confined to any one aspect of the political process; rather, it is generally distributed over different types of items.

There are too few items to support a statement about 13-year-olds' willingness to participate in the political process. Percentages of 17-year-olds reporting that they actually participated in the political process declined, while other indicators of 17-year-old interests in political participation showed mixed results.

As seen in Figure 8, 13-year-old performance declined on 4 of the 10 items concerning the electoral process. Since no items showed a significant increase, it appears that a decrease in knowledge occurred. Thirteen-year-olds showed little or no change in knowledge on many items about voting behavior and about reasons for various features of the electoral system. The largest decline occurred on two questions concerning the election of senators.

Seventeen-year-olds' results (Figure 9) went down on five of eight items on the electoral process, indicating an overall decline in performance. The greatest decline for 17-year-olds occurred on two items concerning facts about the electoral process — one on the method of selecting senators and another on the nomination of presidential candidates.

Recognition of governmental officials did not improve for 13-year-olds and showed somewhat of a decline for 17-year-olds. While nearly all teenagers could name the President of the United States, about one-fifth of the 13-year-olds in either assessment year successfully identified at least one of their congressional representatives; and slightly less than half the 17-year-olds in 1976 named either their congressperson or one of their senators. Seventeen-year-olds' results on this task dropped 9 percentage points from 1969. Around three-fifths of the 13-year-olds in both assessment years could name the governor of their state. Approximately 70% of the 17-year-olds identified their state's governor in 1976, a decline of 13 percentage points from 1969.

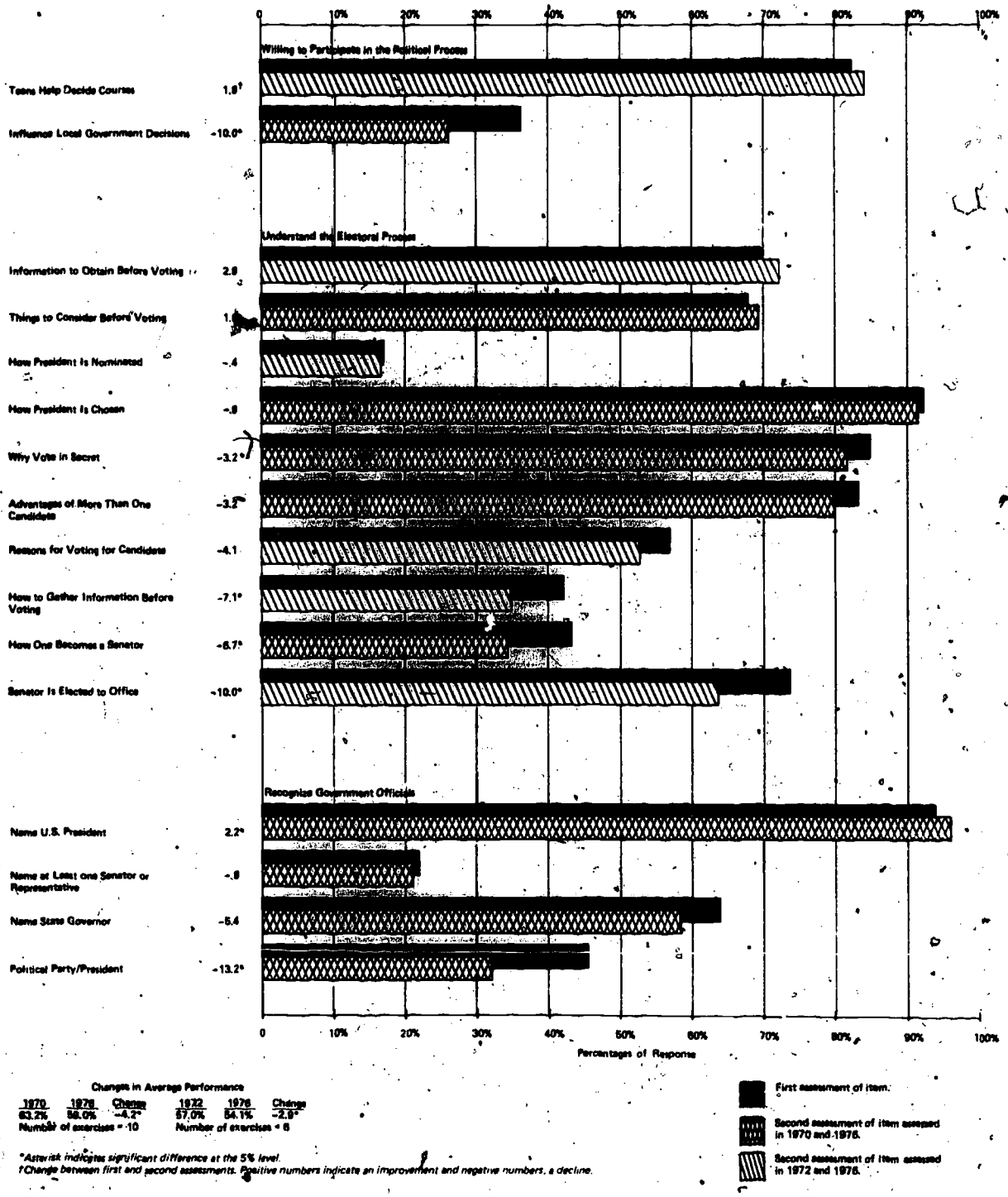
Willingness to Participate in the Political Process: Item Results

Several methods were used to assess willingness to participate in the political process. Students were asked about their actual participation in various political activities, about their knowledge of strategies for political participation and about their attitudes regarding various hypothetical situations. The majority of these questions were administered only to 17-year-olds.

Seventeen-year-olds were asked if they had actually participated in three types of political activities: signing a petition, writing a letter to a governmental official and helping in a public election campaign. Reported participation in all three of these activities declined 7 to 9 percentage points from 1969 to 1976. Of these three activities, 17-year-olds were most likely to have signed a petititon — 57% had done so in 1976. Fifteen percent in 1976 had written a letter to a governmental official. Few had participated in a public election campaign; this percentage declined from 18% in 1969 to 9% in 1976.

Exhibit 9 reveals that less than half the 17-year-olds in either 1970 or 1976 felt that they could influence decisions of local government. The percentage of 17-year-olds feeling they could have such influence dropped considerably. Those 13- and 17-year-olds who felt they could exert an influence were less able in 1976 than in the first assessment to give methods one could use to influence a local government. Acceptable ways to influence local government decisions included circulating petitions or pamphlets, using the mass media, demonstrating or picketing, writing one's representatives, campaigning for the

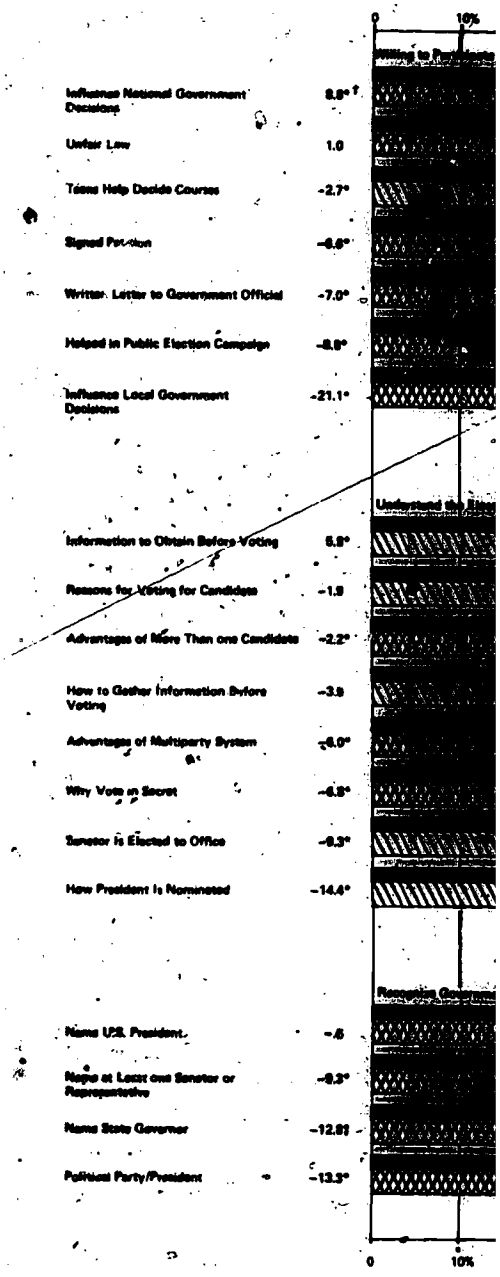
FIGURE 8. Item Percentages of Response and Average Performance Levels on Political Process Items for the First and Second Assessments, Age 13



*Asterisk indicates significant difference at the 5% level.
†Change between first and second assessments. Positive numbers indicate an improvement and negative numbers, a decline.

40

FIGURE 9. Item Perc
Political Process I

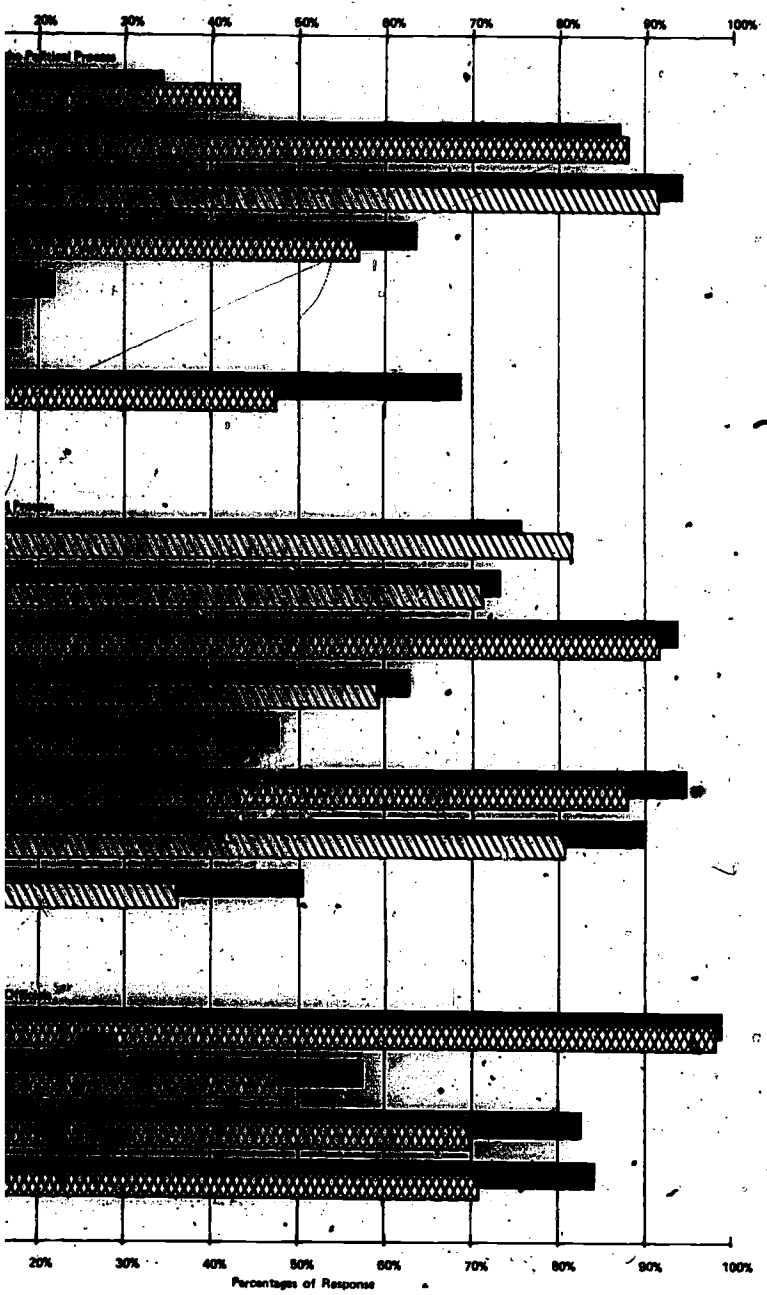


Changes in Average Performance

1988	1976	Change	1972	1976	Change
85.9%	89.0%	−3.5*	74.4%	70.0%	−4.4*
Number of exercises = 13			Number of exercises = 6		

*Asterisk indicates significant difference at the 5% level.
†Change between first and second assessments. Positive numbers indicate an

tages of Response and Average Performance Levels on
ıms for the First and Second Assessments, Age 17



provement and negative numbers, a decline.

EXHIBIT 9. Percentages of Response to Item "Can You Influence Local Government Decisions?" Ages 13 and 17

A. Do you think you can have any influence on decisions of local government?

	13-Year-Olds		17-Year-Olds	
	1970	1976	1969	1976
● Yes	42%	44%	73%	56%*
○ No				

B. (If Yes to A) How?

C. (If No to A) Why Not?

Percentage Answering Yes and Giving an Acceptable Answer to Part B

13-Year-Olds		17-Year-Olds	
1970	1976	1969	1976
36%	26%*	69%	47%*‡

**Indicates significant difference at the .05 level between the first and second assessments.*
‡Change is -21.1.

officials of one's choice and joining a committee or political party.

On a similar question, but concerning the national level, results were quite different. The percentage of 17-year-olds feeling that they could have an influence at the national level increased from 39% to 52% between 1969 and 1976; the percentage then able to give acceptable methods of influencing the government increased from 34% to 43%.

It is interesting to note that in 1969 close to three-fourths of the 17-year-olds felt that they could influence their local government, while only two-fifths thought they could influence their national government. By 1976, percentages on these questions became more similar, with slightly over half feeling they could influence either level of government.

Thirteen- and 17-year-olds were asked if they felt teenagers should help decide upon course offerings in their school system. Most felt that teens should participate. In 1976, 84% of the 13-year-olds and 91% of the 17-year-olds responded affirmatively. This represented no change from 1972 for 13-year-olds and a slight decline for 17-year-olds. Items asking what students would do about an unfair class rule or an unfair law showed no significant change in performance from the first to the second assessment; approximately 88% of the 17-year-olds responded acceptably.

Nine-year-olds were asked a series of questions concerning their willingness to participate in classroom decisions — for example, where to go on a field trip, what games to play at recess, what topic to choose for a report. Seventy to 85% of the children

expressed a willingness to participate in such decisions in 1976; this represented no significant change in their attitudes since the 1972 assessment.

Understanding the Electoral Process: Item Results

Understanding the electoral process includes knowledge of specific facts about the electoral system, understanding the reasons for various features of the system and awareness of things one should consider when voting.

The item shown in Exhibit 10 asked 13- and 17-year-olds to differentiate between elected and appointed officials.

In 1976, about two-thirds of the 13-year-olds realized that a U.S. senator — of all the choices given — is the only elected official. Although results for 17-year-olds were considerably better than those for 13-year-olds, performance of both age groups showed close to a 10 percentage-point decline from 1972 to 1976. The increase in the number of 17-year-old "I don't know" responses in the second assessment is noteworthy.

Slightly over 90% of the 13-year-olds in both 1970 and 1976 knew that the President is chosen by the people. Nine-year-old performance on this item dropped; 84% in 1970 and 72% in 1976 gave an acceptable answer.

There was considerable uncertainty about how presidential candidates are selected. Under 20% of the 13-year-olds in either assessment year answered a question on this topic correctly. Seventeen-year-old performance showed a sharp decline; half of the 17-year-olds answered correctly in 1972, compared to 36% in 1976 — a 14 percentage-point drop.

Exhibit 11 displays an item concerning reasons for using the multiparty system.

Most 17-year-olds answered this question correctly; 13-year-olds were slightly less successful. Seventeen-year-old performance did decline slightly between assessments.

The two older age groups were asked, "What might happen if people could not vote in secret?" Although performance declined from the first to the second assessment for both age groups, overall percentages of success were fairly high. In the first assessment, 85% of the 13-year-olds and 95% of the 17-year-olds answered acceptably, while in 1976, 82% at age 13 and 88% at age 17 did so. Seventeen-year-olds had considerably more difficulty in identifying the problems that might occur if we had only one political party. Forty-eight percent in 1969 and 42% in 1976 answered correctly.

EXHIBIT 10. Percentages of Response to Item "Which Official Is Elected to Office?" Ages 13 and 17

In the United States which one of the following is elected to office?

	13-Year-Olds		17-Year-Olds	
	1972	1976	1972	1976
● A United States Senator	74%	64%*	90%	81%*
○ The United States Secretary of State	11	14*	4	5
○ A United States Supreme Court Justice	6	6	4	4
○ The United States Ambassador to Great Britain	1	2*	+	+
○ I don't know.	8	14*	2	10*

+ indicates rounded percent less than one.

**Indicates significant difference at the .05 level between the first and second assessments.*

EXHIBIT 11. Percentages of Response to Item "Why It Is Good To Have at Least Two Candidates for an Office," Ages 13 and 17

Why is it good that we usually have at least two candidates for each office in an election?

	13-Year-Olds		17-Year-Olds	
	1970	1976	1969	1976
○ So elections can be honest	8%	9%	1%	1%*
● So people can have a choice	83	80	94	92*
○ So more people can hold office	3	5*	4	4
○ So we can reduce the costs of elections	4	3	+	1*
○ I don't know.	2	2†	1	2*

+ Indicates rounded percent less than one.
**Indicates significant difference at the .05 level between the first and second assessments.*
†Figures do not total 100% due to rounding.

Several questions concerned things one should think about when voting. Percentages of success across assessment years did not change appreciably for many of these questions. In 1976, 53% of the 13-year-olds and 71% of the 17-year-olds stated that qualifications other than friendship should be major considerations when voting. Percentages for 1972 performance did not differ significantly from these. Thirteen-year-olds' knowledge of sources of information about the candidates and their positions declined from 42% to 35%, while that of 17-year-olds was around 60% for both assessment years. Eighty-two percent of the 17-year-olds in 1976 formulated two reasonable questions to ask a candidate for office — an increase of 6 percentage points from 1972. Approximately seven-tenths of the 13-year-olds in both assessment years asked two reasonable questions. Finally, about 70% of 13-year-olds could think of two things they should consider about a specific issue before voting.

Recognizing Governmental Officials: Item Results

All items concerning recognition of governmental officials covered a six- or seven-year change period, from 1969 or 1970 to 1976. Seventeen-year-olds' ability to name governmental officials generally declined, while results for 13-year-olds were mixed. Nearly all 13- and 17-year-olds in both assessment years could name the President of the United States. In the first assessment, 94% of the 13-year-olds and 99% of the 17-year-olds identified Richard Nixon; in 1976, 96% of the 13-year-olds and 98% of the 17-year-olds named Gerald Ford. Nine-year-olds, however, showed a drop in performance. Ninety-one percent named Nixon, but only 80% named Ford. When asked to identify a picture of the President, however, over 90% of the 9-year-olds in both assessment years chose the correct picture.

There was a considerable decline in ability to identify the political party of the President. In 1970, 45% at age 13 and 84% at age 17 gave the correct political party, while in 1976 these percentages dropped to 32% and 71%, respectively, a 13 percentage-point drop at each age. It should be noted that President Ford had not run for the presidency prior to the 1976 assessment; this might in part account for the declines.

Thirteen- and 17-year-olds were asked to identify a number of other governmental officials. Performance either dropped or stayed the same on all these questions except for the secretary of state. Recognition of Henry Kissinger in 1976 showed a dramatic increase over recognition of William P. Rogers in the first assessment.

Students at ages 13 and 17 were asked to name at least one congressional representative from their state. It was felt that this was the minimum knowledge needed to make contact with one's representative at the federal level. Very few 13-year-olds could name either their congressperson or one of their senators; approximately one-fifth of them did so in both 1970 and 1976. Seventeen-year-olds' ability to name at least one representative dropped from 57% in 1969 to 48% in 1976.

Ability to identify the governor of their state remained the same from the first to the second assessment for 13-year-olds, but declined for 17-year-olds. Approximately 60% of the 13-year-olds in both assessments named the governor of their state, while 82% of the 17-year-olds in 1969 and 70%* in 1976 identified their governor correctly.

CHAPTER 5

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Highlights of the Results

- Overall performance on items about international affairs declined for both 13- and 17-year-olds.
  - Since the number of items discussed in this chapter was relatively small and the items addressed diverse topics, average performance levels were not calculated. However, on a total of 10 items, 13-year-olds' performance improved significantly on only 1 item and declined significantly on 5.
  - On a total of seven items, 17-year-olds showed a significant improvement on one item and a significant decline on five.
- Nine- and 13-year-olds' interest in other lands was relatively high. Thirteen-year-olds evidenced some decline in interest between the first and second assessments.
- Thirteen- and 17-year-olds improved in their ability to state peaceful methods to avoid future wars.
- In both assessment years, slightly more than three-fifths of the 9-year-olds and nearly four-fifths of the 13-year-olds could suggest a way to settle a dispute between nations peacefully.
- Close to 85% of the 17-year-olds in 1976 could state the purpose of the United Nations; this represented a decline in performance from the first assessment.

Technological improvements in communication and transportation have brought the nations of the world closer together. In economics, military armaments or boundary disputes, the activities of one nation can greatly affect the affairs of many. To appreciate the role that international politics can play in our lives, students should be interested in other nations and cultures, should be aware of some of the problems faced by other countries and should understand some of the ways nations can work together to achieve peace.

Since the focus of the assessment was upon knowledge and attitudes about the United States' political structure, there were relatively few questions concerning international affairs. Questions dealt with three major topics: interest in other countries, awareness of strategies for keeping peace between nations and knowledge about international organizations. In light of the small number of questions and the diversity of topics addressed, average results were not computed for the cluster of items in this chapter.

Figures 10 and 11 display results for items about international affairs for 13- and 17-year-olds, respectively. At least three-fifths of the 13-year-olds answered most questions correctly. They showed a substantial improvement in knowledge of ways to avoid future wars. However, out of a total of 10 questions, a significant improvement occurred on only 1 item, while a significant decline in performance occurred on 5.

Seventeen-year-olds also improved in their ability to state ways of avoiding war in the future. Their overall performance on items concerning foreign affairs dropped somewhat — five of the seven items showed a significant decline, and only one showed a significant improvement.

Nine-year-olds tended to do slightly less well on these items in 1976 than in the first assessment year. While their interest in learning about other lands remained high, their interest in world political events and their understanding of the concept of world peace dropped somewhat.

International Affairs: Item Results

Just over 80% of the 9-year-olds and 75% of the 13-year-olds in 1976 indicated an interest in other lands and could give a reason for their interest. While there was no change in 9-year-olds' performance from 1972, 13-year-olds' results dropped 9 percentage points. On a similar item asking about interest in political events in other countries, results for both 9- and 13-year-olds went down between 1972 and 1976. In 1976, 72% of the 9-year-olds and 75% of the 13-year-olds expressed such an interest and gave a reason for it — a drop of 5 percentage points for 9-year-olds and 7 points for 13-year-olds.

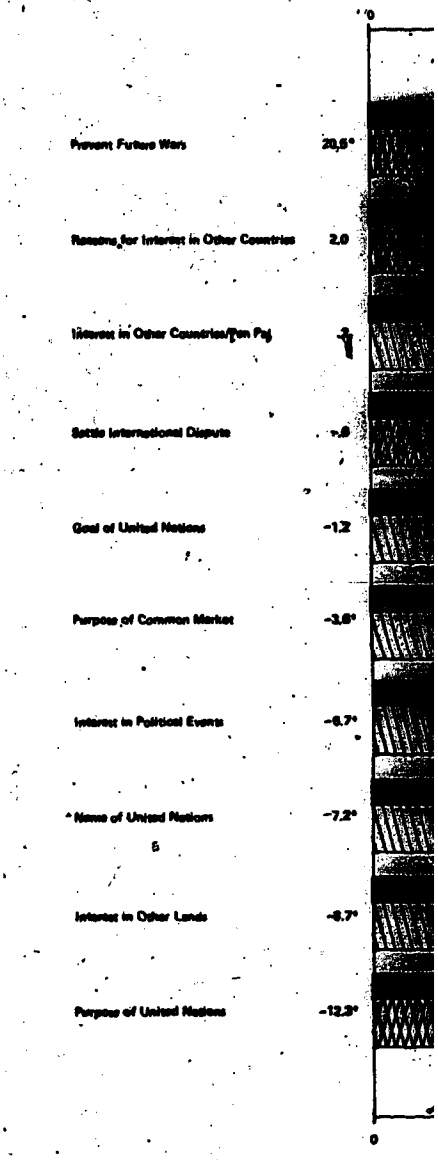
Thirteen- and 17-year-olds were asked why we are more interested now than in earlier times about events in other countries. While 13-year-olds' performance did not change between the first and second assessments — approximately two-fifths in either year being able to give at least three reasons — 17-year-olds' percentages declined from 67% to 56%.

Two items, one given only to 9-year-olds and one administered at both ages 9 and 13, asked children what questions they would ask a pen pal or a person who had visited foreign lands. Although the questions were intended to reveal interest in foreign lands, children proved much more interested in details about the pen pal's personal life or in general questions about a trip. Thus, percentages of success on these questions were quite low.

Exhibit 12 displays an item about the problems faced by emerging nations. The 17-year-old students proved less successful on this question in the second assessment.

The majority of acceptable responses mentioned either the language and cultural differences between African tribes — "because the tribes all have their own leaders, beliefs and languages" — or the lack of an established, stable government — "many times governments are made up of different factions fighting one another."

FIGURE 10. Item
International A

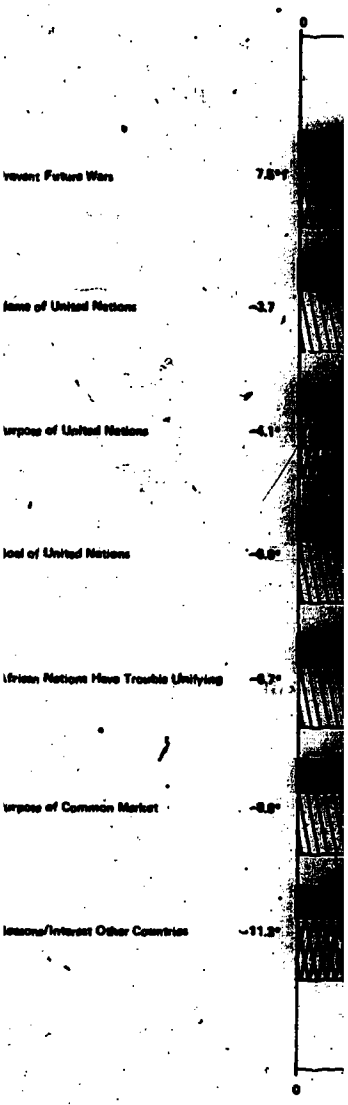


*Asterisk indicates significant difference at the 5% level.
†Change between first and second assessments. Positive numb

and Average Performance Levels on
and Second Assessments, Age 13

ibert, a decline.

FIGURE 11. Ite
Internationa



*Asterisk indicates significant difference at p ≤ 5% level.
†Change between first and second assessments. Positive num

e Performance Levels on
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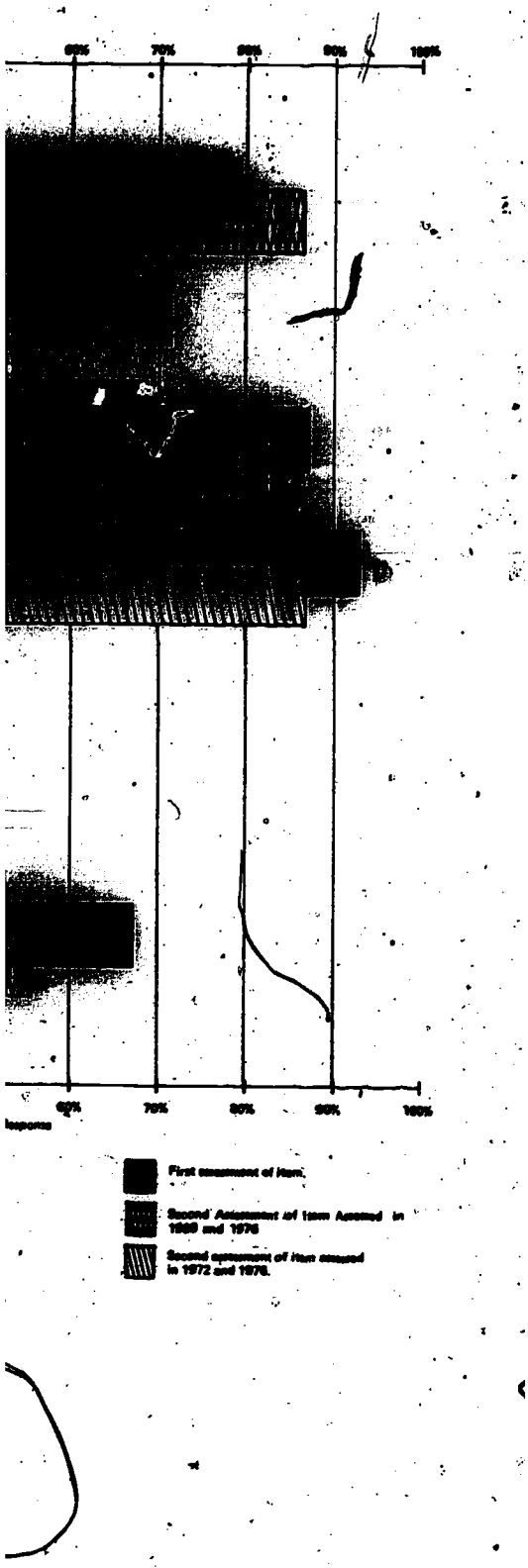


EXHIBIT 12. Percentages of Response to Item "African Nations' Difficulty in Achieving Unity," Age 17

Give ONE reason why it has been difficult for new African nations to achieve national unity.

_____

_____

Percentages of Acceptable Responses

	1972	1976
17-year-olds	49%	42%*

**Indicates significant difference at the .05 level between the first and second assessments.*

Several items examined students' concepts of world harmony and their knowledge of ways to avoid or settle international disputes. Results on these items, administered in 1969 or 1970 and then in 1976, may well reflect the impact of the Viet Nam War on the national consciousness.

Both 13- and 17-year-olds showed a substantial improvement in their ability to state two or more ways to avoid future wars. Thirteen-year-olds' results went up 20* percentage points – from 63% in 1970 to 84% in 1976 – while 17-year-olds' performance improved 8* points, from 79% in 1969 to 86% in 1976.

There was no difference between 1970 and 1976 in 9- and 13-year-olds' abilities to suggest how to settle a hypothetical dispute between nations peaceably. Slightly over three-fifths of the 9-year-olds and close to four-fifths of the 13-year-olds gave reasonable suggestions in each assessment year.

Nine-year-olds were asked what "world peace" meant. In 1970, 48% gave a satisfactory explanation; but by 1976, only 34% did so – a drop of 14 percentage points. Most acceptable responses stated that it meant no wars or no fighting – for example, "no fighting and doing bad stuff around the world." About 4% thought that world peace referred to peace and quiet. Children were also asked, "Do we have peace everywhere in the world now?" In 1976, 80% said "no" – a decline of 12 percentage points from 1970. Their ability to cite specific examples of war changed dramatically between 1970 and 1976. In 1970, 62% of them gave an example of a war – such as, "fighting in Asia" – while in 1976, only 19% did so. In 1976, 9-year-olds were more likely to make general statements that war still existed, to give examples of violence or riots within the United States or to say that there are not many wars any more.

Another series of questions concerned knowledge about international organizations; one dealing with the United Nations is shown in Exhibit 13.

EXHIBIT 13. Percentages of Response to Item "Name of International Organization for World Peace," Ages 13 and 17

What is the name of the international organization established after the second World War for the maintenance of world peace?

	13-Year-Olds		17-Year-Olds	
	1972	1976	1972	1976
● The United Nations	67%	60%*	71%	68%‡
○ The League of Nations	8	5*	13	16
○ The Commonwealth of Nations	6	4	2	2
○ The International Labor Organization	6	6	3	3
○ I don't know.	12†	25*	11	11

**Indicates significant difference at the .05 level between the first and second assessments.*
†Figures do not total 100% due to rounding error.
‡Change is -3.7.

Performance dropped for 13-year-olds over the four-year period but did not change significantly for 17-year-olds. A sizeable percentage of 17-year-olds, 16%, confused the United Nations with the League of Nations. Also noteworthy is the large proportion of 13-year-olds, 25% in 1976, who responded "I don't know" to this question.

When asked about the purpose of the United Nations, 62% of the 13-year-olds and 83% of the 17-year-olds in the second assessment correctly selected the answer "to help nations settle their differences peacefully." Seventeen-year-olds' performance declined 4 percentage points since 1972, while that of 13-year-olds fell 12 points. On another multiple-choice question about the goal of the United Nations, which had shorter alternative answers with less involved phrasing, approximately 42% of the 9-year-olds, 75% of the 13-year-olds and 87% of the 17-year-olds answered correctly in 1976. On this item, performance for 9- and 13-year-olds did not change from 1972 to 1976, while that of 17-year-olds declined 6 percentage points.

Knowledge about the purpose of the European Common Market declined between 1972 and 1976 for both 13- and 17-year-olds; however, 17-year-olds exhibited a higher percentage of success in both years than did 13-year-olds. Thirteen-year-olds' results declined from 22% to 18%; 17-year-olds' performance dropped from 46% to 37%.

CHAPTER 6

GROUP RESULTS

Highlights of the Results

- In most cases, results for males and females did not differ greatly. At age 9, males outperformed females on the citizenship items. At age 13, males did better than females on the citizenship items in 1970; but the 1976 performance on these items was reversed, with females showing higher performance than males. Seventeen-year-old males did better than females in the first assessments of both citizenship and social studies, but performance of the two groups was virtually identical in the second assessment.
- Black 9-year-olds showed a tendency to decline less rapidly than did their white counterparts. Achievement of black and white teenagers declined at about the same rate, with black performance averaging about 15 percentage points below that of whites.
- The Northeastern and Central regions typically performed above the national level; Western performance was about the same as that of the nation, and results for the Southeast were below the nation. At age 13, the West showed a tendency to decline relative to the nation. However, at age 17, Western performance improved, relative to the nation, on the social studies items.
- Performance of community-size groups was fairly consistent, with fringes around big cities performing above the nation and big cities below it; medium cities and smaller places were near the national level.
- Affluent-urban (high metropolitan) communities achieved consistently above the national level; disadvantaged-urban (low metropolitan) communities performed consistently below the nation.
- The extreme-rural community group showed a tendency to improve relative to the nation. This relative improvement was most marked for 13- and 17-year-olds on the citizenship items.
- Achievement was related to the education level of one's parents. Those whose parents had higher levels of education showed higher performance levels, while those whose parents had less education performed less well.

In addition to national results, National Assessment provides data on the performance of various groups of people defined by their sex, their race, region of the country they live in, size and type of their community and level of their parents' education. Definitions of the categories used for each group appear in Appendix A.

Group performance can be examined in three ways. First, we can determine whether the achievement of each group — males, females, blacks, whites and so forth — went up or down over time. Second, we can consider the performance of each group relative to the nation. Third, we can compare the change in a group's performance over time to the change in the national performance level. The graphs in Figures 12 through 16 display these data. In each figure, the graphs on the left show results for all citizenship items (six- or seven-year change period) included in this report; and the graphs on the right present data for all social studies items (four-year change period) discussed here. On each graph, national performance is indicated by a solid line and group results by dashed lines; the difference between group and national performance is the difference between these lines. The average level of performance in the first assessment year appears at the left end of each line, and the average level in the second assessment at the right end. Since each line plots a mean change in achievement over time, a difference in the slopes of the national- and group-performance lines will indicate a change in a group's standing, relative to the nation. In reviewing these graphs, it should be remembered that each graph shows results for a different group of items; thus, average performance levels on different graphs should not be compared.

Sex

Figure 12 displays performance of males and females at ages 9, 13 and 17 and their positions relative to the nation. At age 9, male and female achievement declined about equally between 1970

FIGURE 12. Average Performance on the First and Second Assessments on Citizenship and Social Studies Items Measuring Political Knowledge and Attitudes for Males and Females, Ages 9, 13 and 17

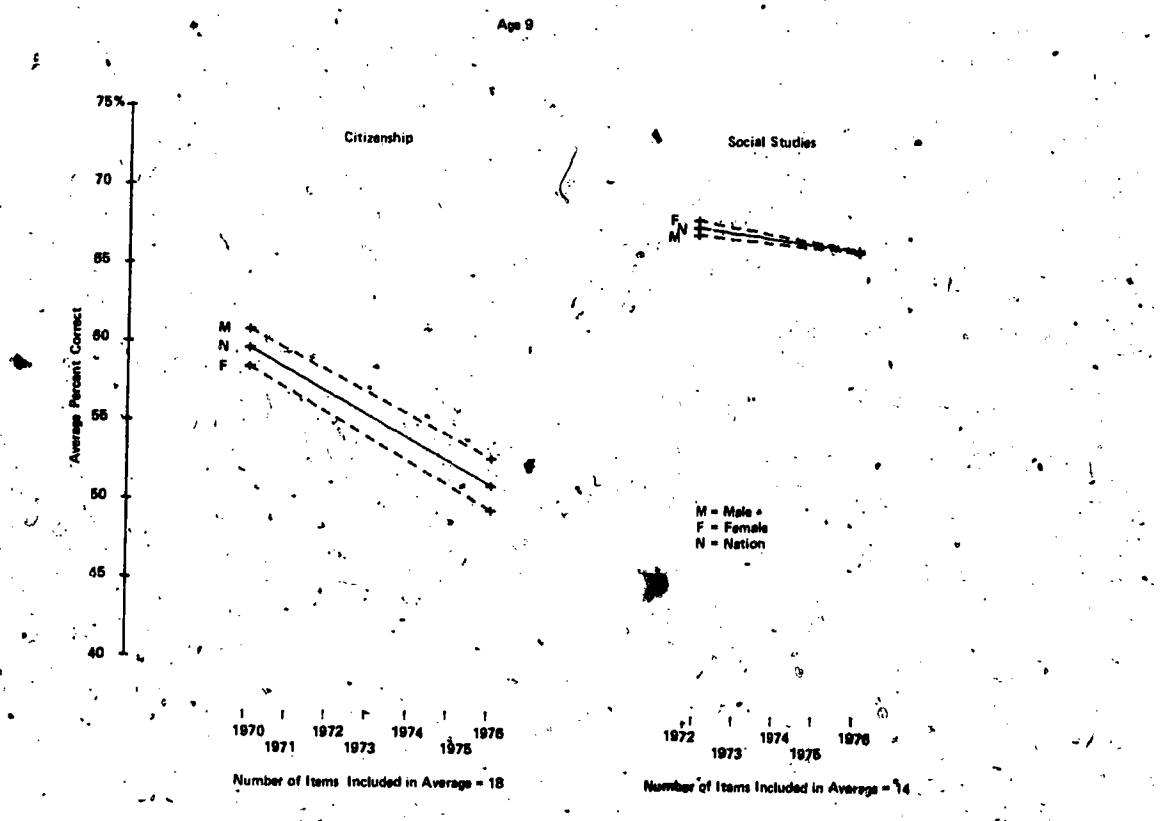
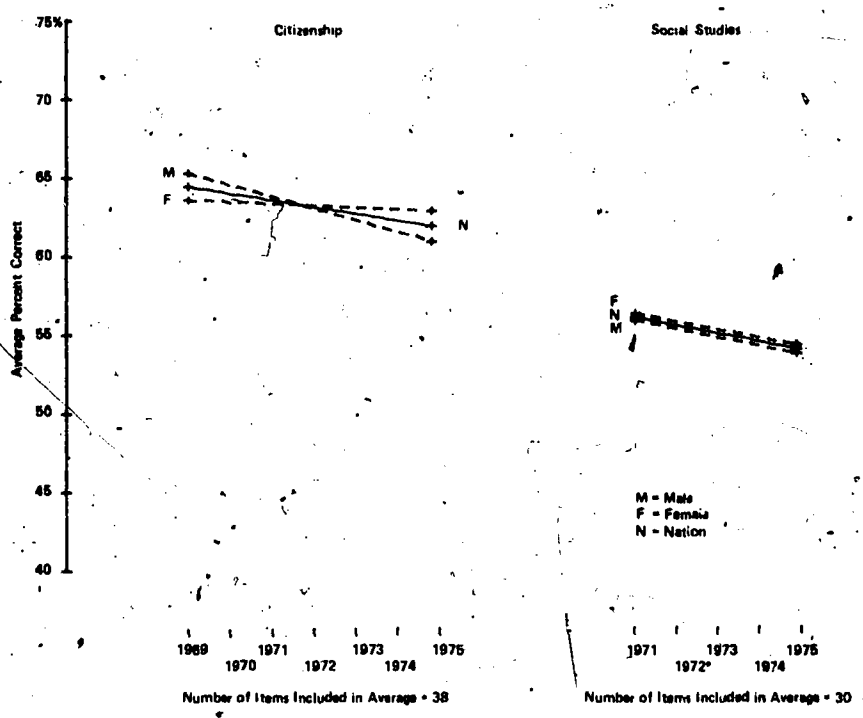
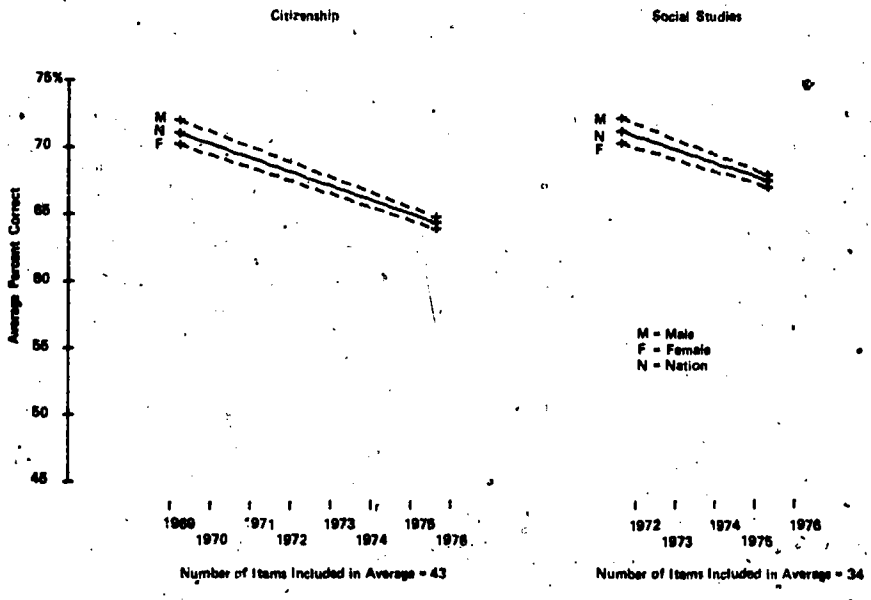


FIGURE 12 (cont.). Average Performance on the First and Second Assessments on Citizenship and Social Studies Items Measuring Political Knowledge and Attitudes for Males and Females, Ages 9, 13 and 17

Age 13



Age 17



and 1976 on the citizenship items, with males performing above the national average in both years and females performing below. Neither male nor female performance differed significantly from the nation on the social studies items (assessed in 1972 and 1976).

Like the 9-year-olds, male and female 13-year-olds did not differ significantly from the nation on the social studies items in either assessment year. However, on the citizenship items, males, who were above the national level in the 1970 assessment, dropped below it in the 1976 assessment, while females' performance changed from a position lower than the nation in the 1970 assessment to one above it in the 1976 assessment. This reversal in 13-year-old male and female performance – males declining and females improving relative to the nation – occurred mainly on citizenship items about the structure and function of government, constitutional rights and respect for others.

Performance of male and female 17-year-olds was virtually identical in 1976. On both the citizenship and social studies items, males were significantly above and females significantly below the nation in the first assessment; but neither group varied significantly from the national level in the second.

Female 17-year-olds improved their position relative to the nation on items measuring respect for others and valuing constitutional rights, while males dropped in relative standing on these items. Male 17-year-olds showed higher performance than females in both assessment years on items about the structure and function of government.

Race

Nine-year-old blacks tended to improve, relative to the nation, on citizenship items (Figure 13). Although they did not improve significantly on social studies items, their decline in performance was not statistically significant, while the white drop was so. Although these results do not provide conclusive

FIGURE 13. Average Performance on the First and Second Assessments on Citizenship and Social Studies Items Measuring Political Knowledge and Attitudes for Blacks and Whites, Ages 9, 13 and 17

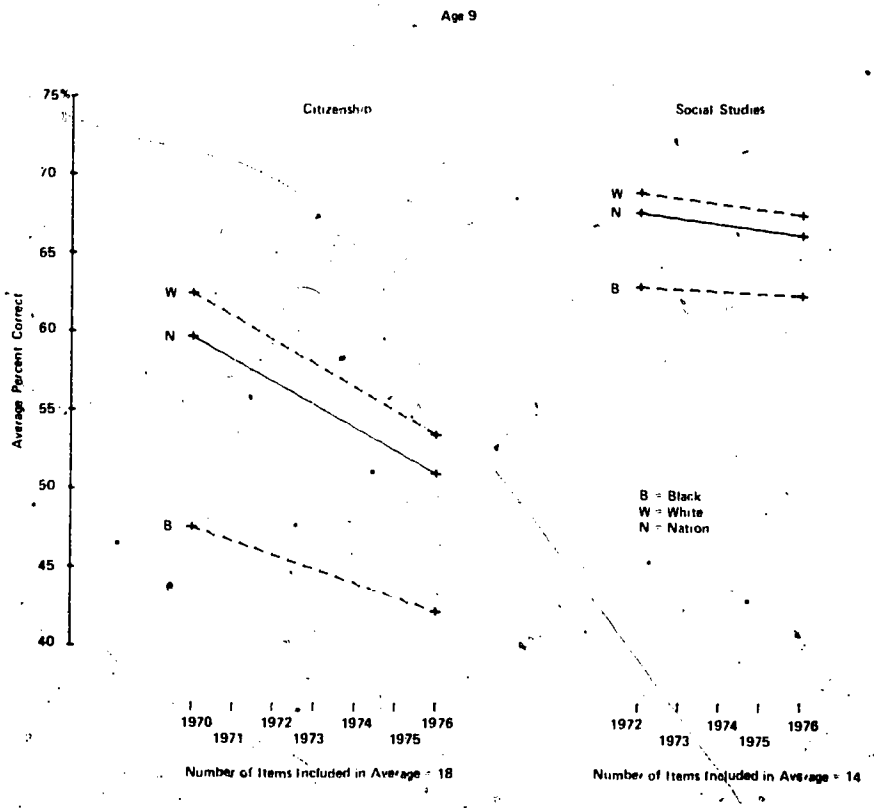
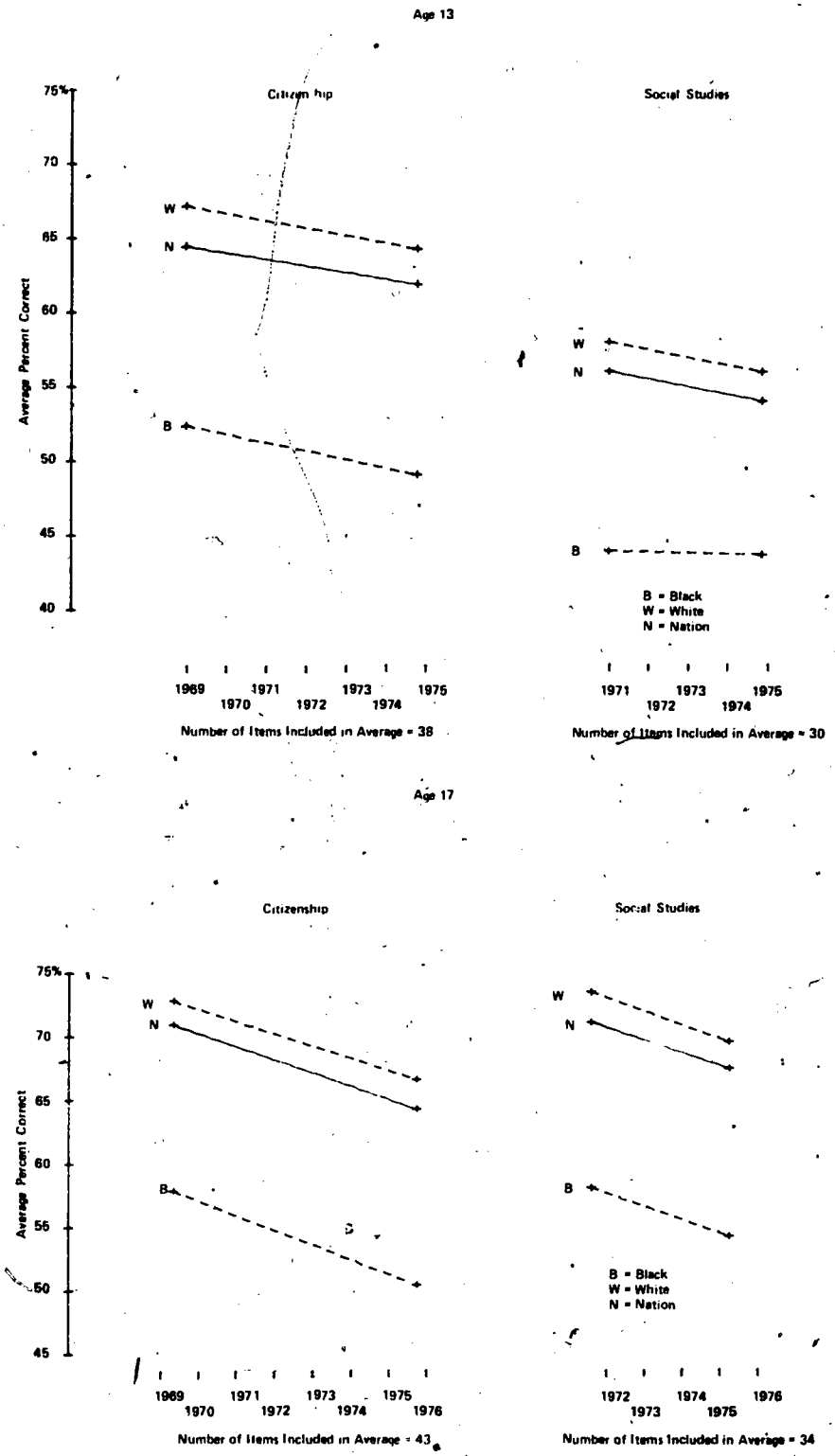


FIGURE 13 (cont.). Average Performance on the First and Second Assessments on Citizenship and Social Studies Items Measuring Political Knowledge and Attitudes for Blacks and Whites, Ages 9, 13 and 17



evidence of a smaller decline in achievement for black than white 9-year-olds, the difference in performance appears to be smaller; this is a trend that bears watching.

As seen in Figure 13, performance of black and white teenagers declined about equally between the first and second assessment, with black performance generally averaging about 15 percentage points below that of whites. The only exception to this pattern occurred at the 13-year-old level on the social studies items. In this case — similar to 9-year-old results on social studies items — black performance did not decline significantly, while that of whites did, although the change in blacks' standing, relative to the nation, was not significant.

Region of the Country

Typically, the Northeastern and Central regions performed above the nation; Western performance was about at the national level, and results for the Southeast were below the nation. In most cases, the various regions showed a decline in performance similar to that of the nation. Figure 14 displays regional performance and changes relative to the nation for all three age levels.

For 9-year-olds, all regions declined at about the same rate as the nation. Changes in relative position were not significant.

Thirteen-year-olds in the Central region showed a significant improvement, relative to the nation, on the citizenship items, while those in the West displayed a tendency to decline on these items. The same trends appeared on the social studies items for 13-year-olds, although they were not as marked. A difference in 13-year-olds' typical pattern of performance occurred on social studies items dealing with constitutional rights. On these items, the Northeast declined significantly, relative to the nation, while the Southeast showed a significant improvement.

Performance of 17-year-olds in the West on the social studies items differed from the pattern seen for

FIGURE 14. Average Performance on the First and Second Assessments on Citizenship and Social Studies Items Measuring Political Knowledge and Attitudes for Region, Ages 9, 13 and 17

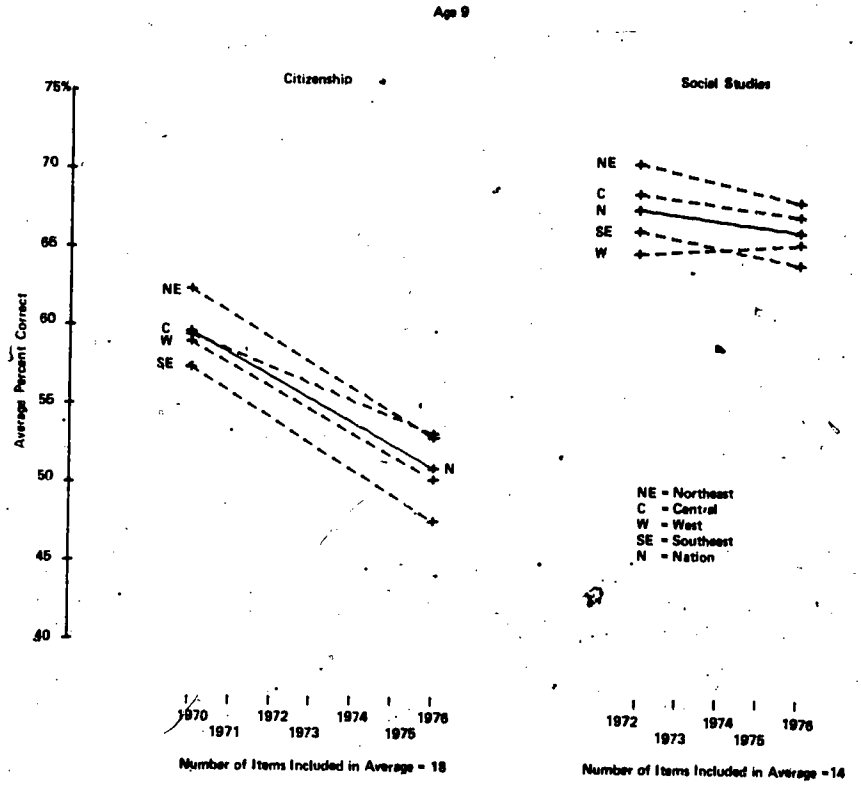
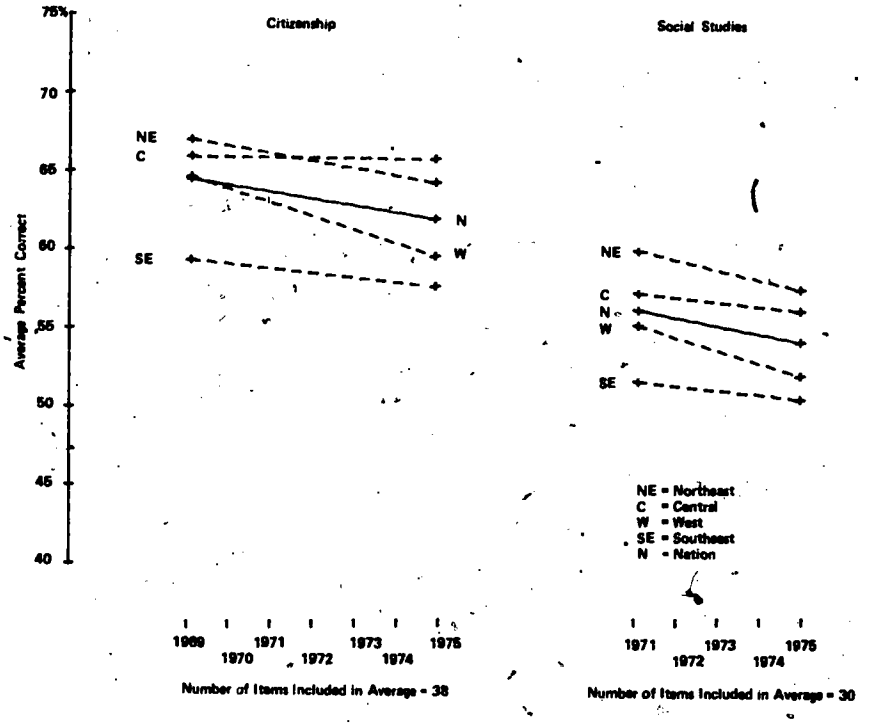
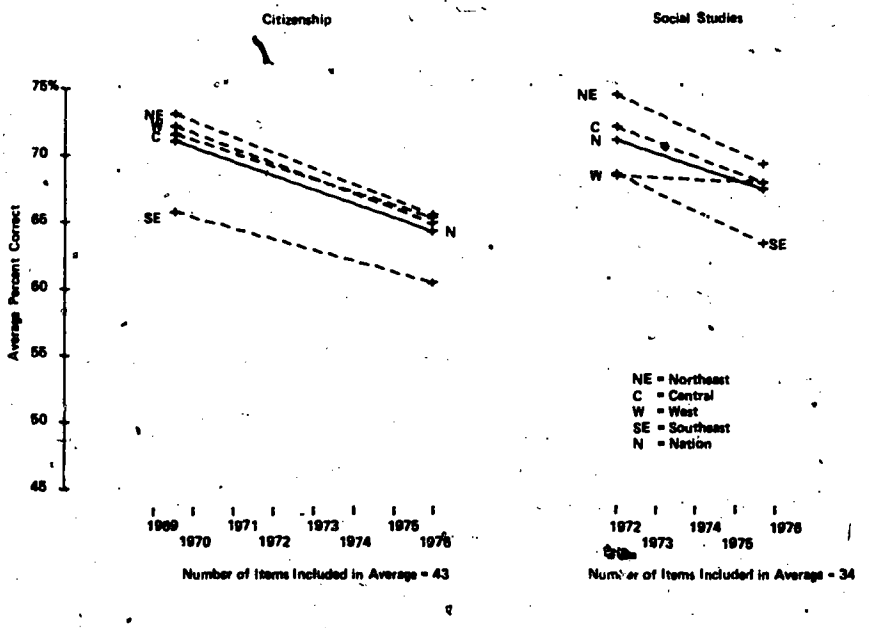


FIGURE 14 (cont.). Average Performance on the First and Second Assessments on Citizenship and Social Studies Items Measuring Political Knowledge and Attitudes for Region, Ages 9, 13 and 17

Age 13



Age 17



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13-year-olds. On these items, Western performance improved considerably, relative to the nation, performance for this region remaining at the same ability level while all other regions declined. Their improvement with regard to the nation was most evident on items measuring respect for others and knowledge of the structure and function of government.

Size and Type of Community

National Assessment describes results for communities of various sizes and for selected socioeconomic groups within the different sized communities. The four community sizes are: (1) big city, (2) fringes around big cities, (3) medium city and (4) smaller places. Three community types are identified: (1) affluent urban (high metropolitan), (2) disadvantaged urban (low metropolitan) and (3) extreme rural. Definitions of each group are found in Appendix A.

In Figure 15, the first graph for each age level displays results for the different community sizes, and the second graph shows data for type of community as defined by socioeconomic and community-size criteria.

The performance of community-size groups did not differ greatly from the national performance level. The fringes-around-big-cities group usually performed above the nation and the big cities below, while medium cities and smaller places were close to the national average. In general, changes in performance relative to the nation either were not significant or followed no clear pattern.

Differences in performance were greater for the community-type groups. The affluent-urban communities performed significantly above the national level, and the disadvantaged-urban communities significantly below, in all cases. In most cases, both these groups showed declines similar to that of the nation. However, at age 9, the disadvantaged-urban group showed a smaller decline than the nation on the citizenship items. The affluent-urban students at age 13 improved, relative to the nation, on the

FIGURE 15. Average Performance on the First and Second Assessments on Citizenship and Social Studies Items Measuring Political Knowledge and Attitudes for Size and Type of Community, Ages 9, 13 and 17

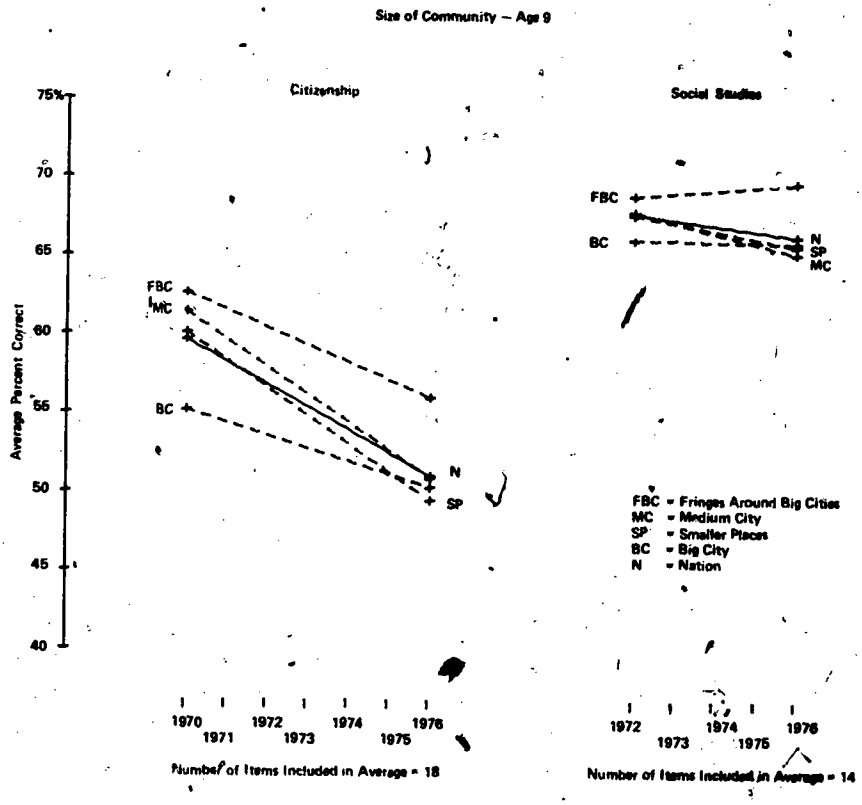


FIGURE 15 (cont.). Average Performance on the First and Second Assessments on Citizenship and Social Studies Items Measuring Political Knowledge and Attitudes for Size and Type of Community, Ages 9, 13 and 17

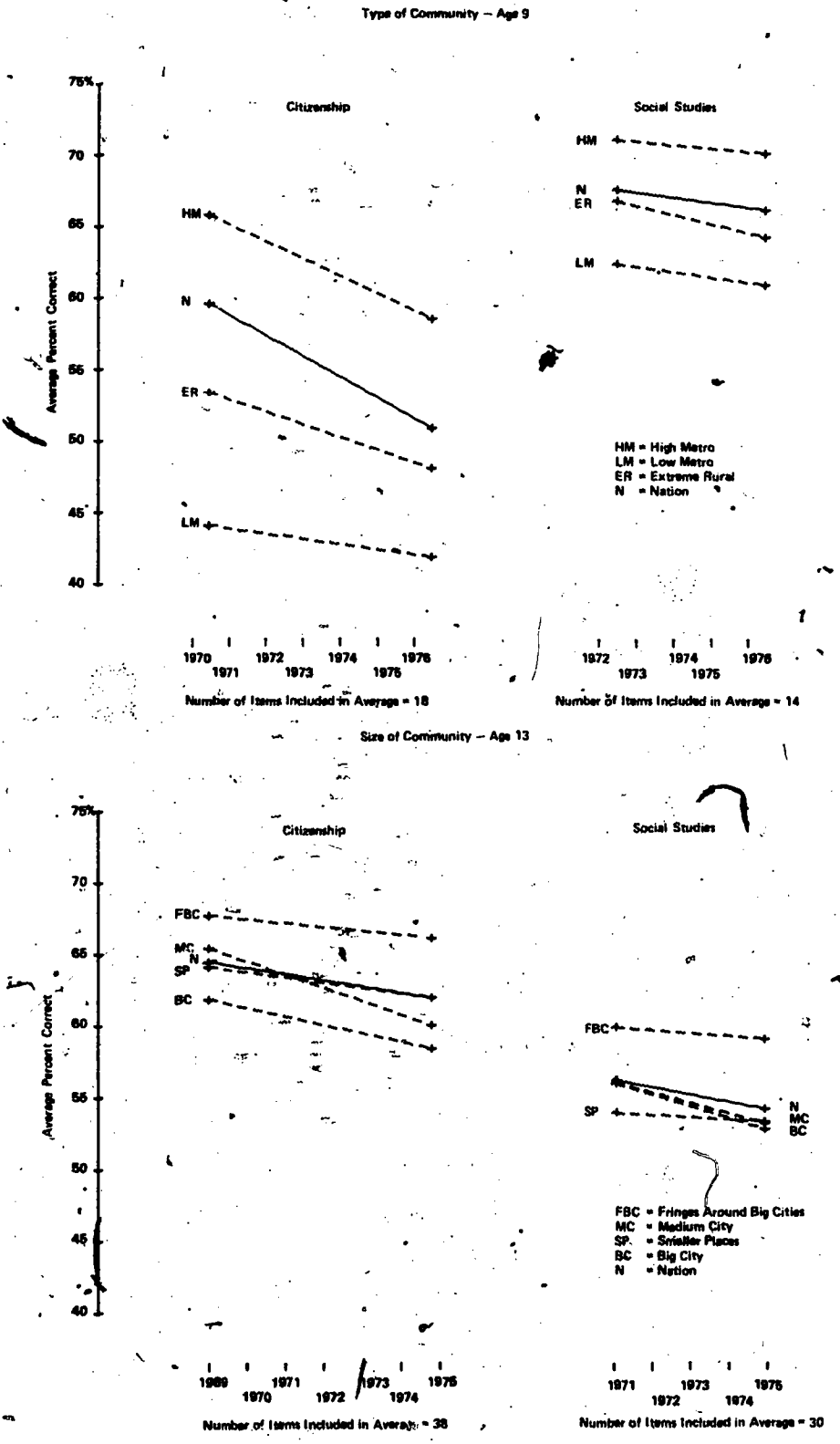
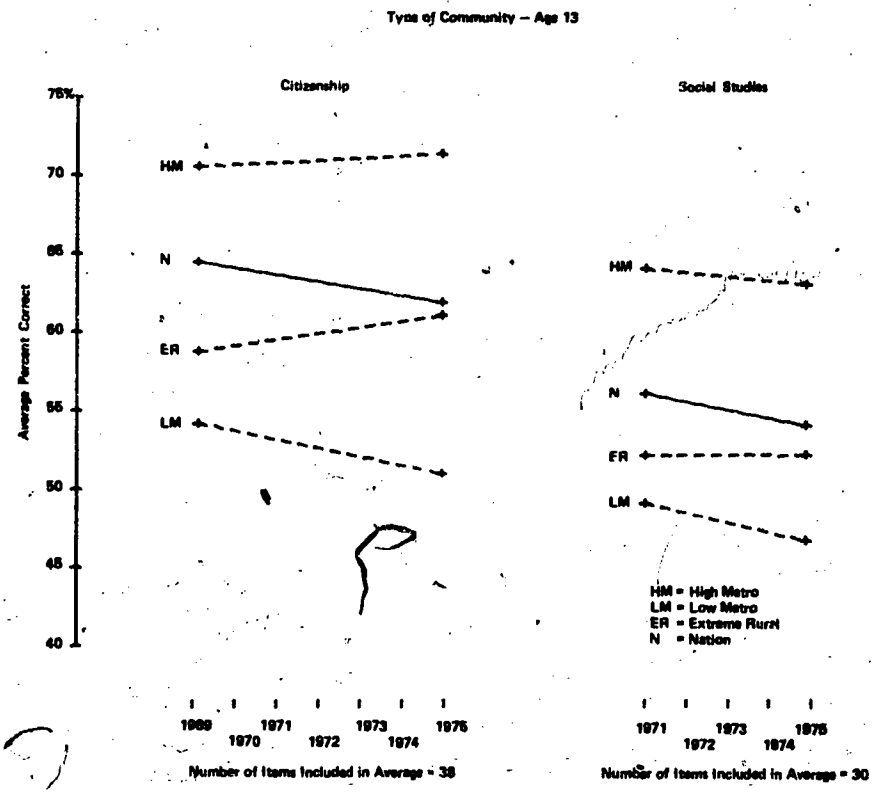


FIGURE 15 (cont.). Average Performance on the First and Second Assessments on Citizenship and Social Studies Items Measuring Political Knowledge and Attitudes for Size and Type of Community; Ages 9, 13 and 17



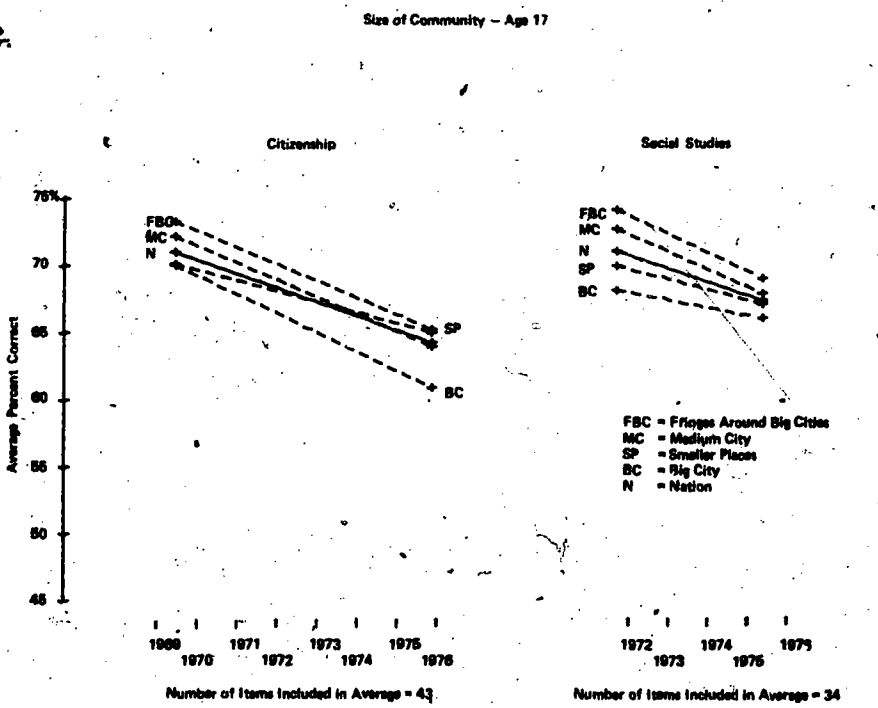
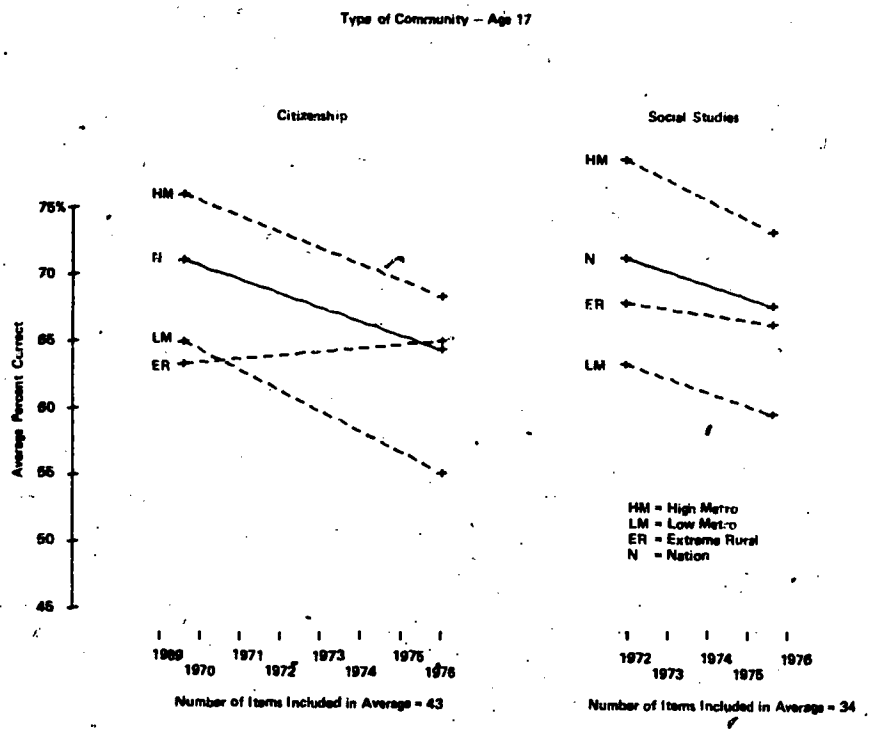


FIGURE 15 (cont.). Average Performance on the First and Second Assessments on Citizenship and Social Studies Items Measuring Political Knowledge and Attitudes for Size and Type of Community, Ages 9, 13 and 17



citizenship items, remaining at the same level of achievement while the national percentage of success dropped.

The extreme-rural group tended to improve, relative to the nation. On the citizenship items, extreme-rural teenagers performed significantly better in the second assessment. This relative improvement was particularly evident for both ages on items concerned with the political process and rights for others, for 13-year-olds on items about constitutional rights and for 17-year-olds on items about the structure and function of government. Teenagers living in extreme-rural communities also showed a tendency to improve, relative to the nation, on the social studies items, although the change in relative position was not significant. Nine-year-olds living in extreme-rural communities tended to improve on the citizenship items.

Parental Education

The education level of one's parents is related to achievement. The graphs in Figure 16 show that higher levels of parental education are associated with higher performance, and lower levels of parental education are associated with lower performance for all ages assessed. Those with at least one parent having some postsecondary education performed significantly above the nation, while those with neither parent having completed high s erformed consistently below it. At ages 9 a ose with at least one parent who had gradu om high school were close to or slightly below the national level of performance, while at age 17 this group was consistently significantly below the nation.

In most instances, the different parental-education groups declined at the same rate as the nation. Exceptions did not follow any clear-cut pattern. Thirteen-year-olds with a parent who had graduated from high school improved relative to the nation on citizenship items. Seventeen-year-olds with a parent having postsecondary education improved in comparison with the nation on citizenship items; those with at least one parent who was a high school graduate declined relative to the nation on the social studies items.

FIGURE 16. Average Performance on the First and Second Assessments on Citizenship and Social Studies Items Measuring Political Knowledge and Attitudes for Parental Education, Ages 9, 13 and 17

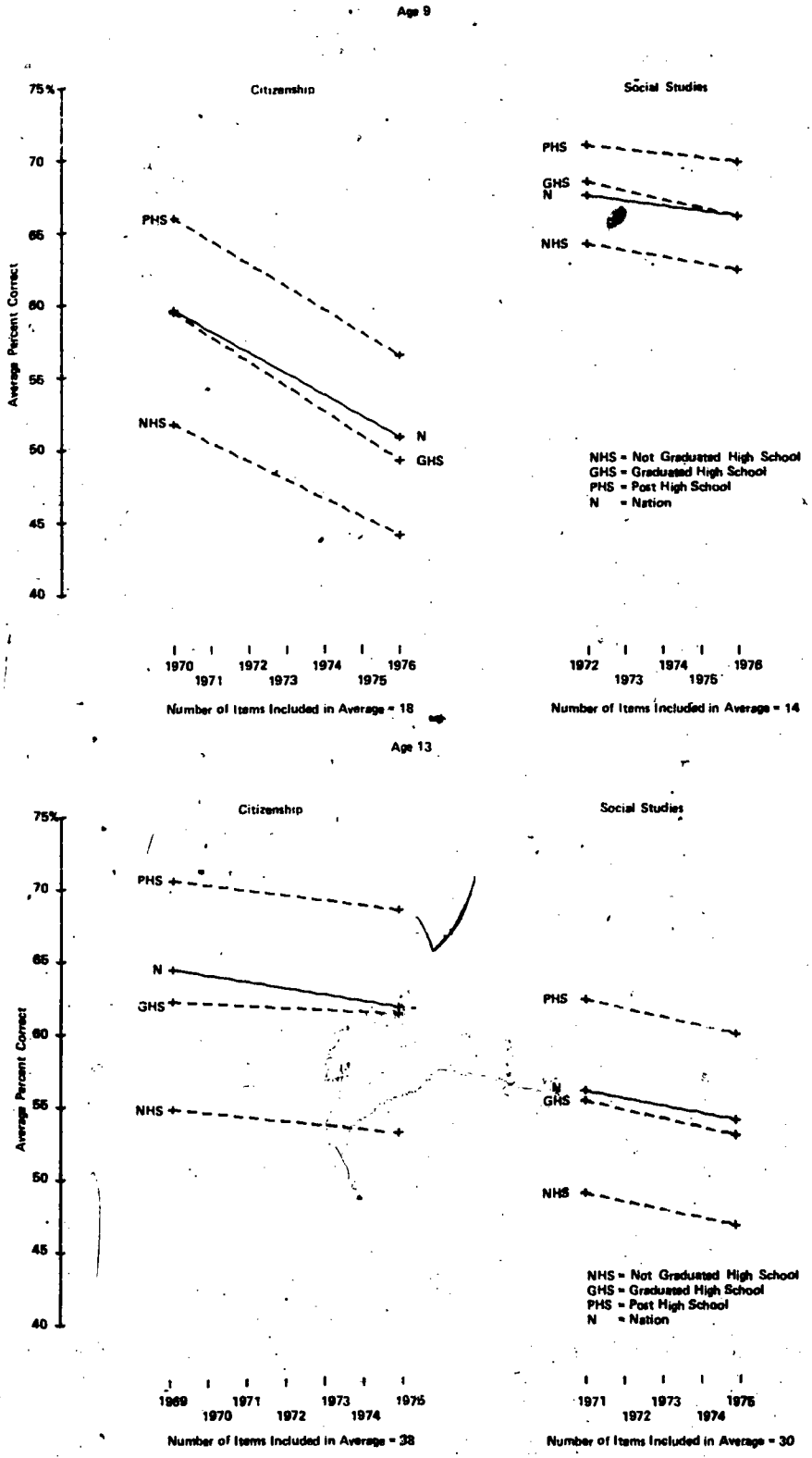
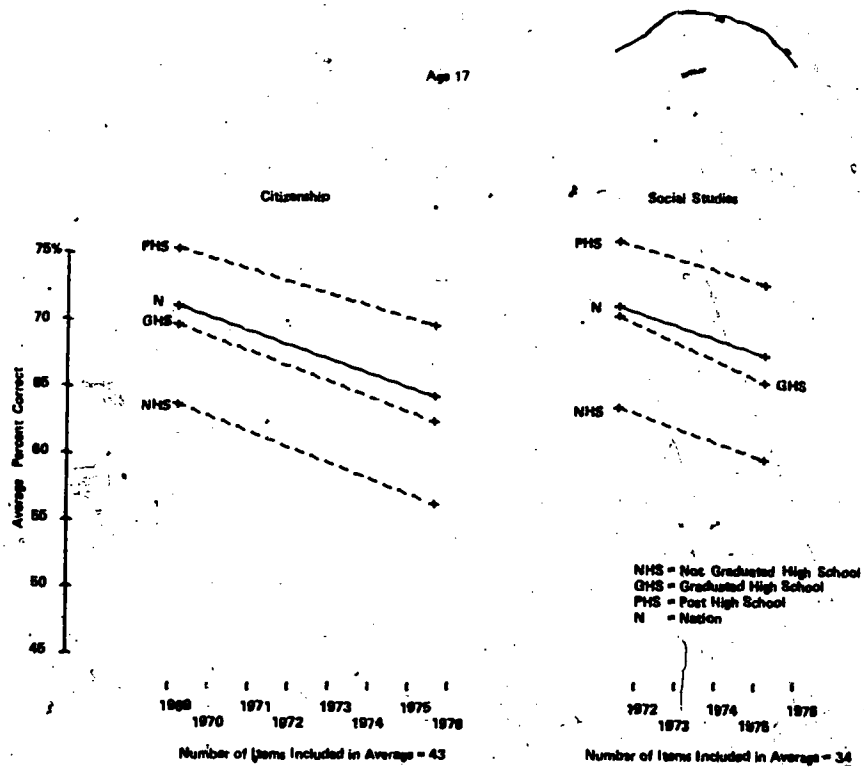


FIGURE 16 (cont.). Average Performance on the First and Second Assessments on Citizenship and Social Studies Items Measuring Political Knowledge and Attitudes for Parental Education, Ages 9, 13 and 17



CHAPTER 7

OBSERVATIONS: CITIZENSHIP AND SOCIAL STUDIES RESULTS

Changes in educational performance — especially in areas as complex as citizenship and social studies — should not be viewed in isolation, but should be considered in light of broad cultural and educational changes. Changes in societal attitudes and expectations, in the political climate, in the school curriculum or in the role of institutions such as the church and the family may all affect student achievement.

To facilitate interpretation and discussion of the results, National Assessment invited three educators with extensive experience in citizenship and social studies to share their opinions about the findings. R. Freeman Butts is chairman of the Advisory Committee of the National Task Force on Citizenship Education. He is serving as Visiting Distinguished Professor of Education at San Jose State University for the 1976–78 academic years. Anna Ochoa is president of the National Council for the Social Studies for 1978 and is associate professor of education at Indiana University, Bloomington. Celeste Woodley presently serves as program development specialist for the Boulder (Colorado) Valley Schools. She is a past chairman on the Publications Board of the National Council for the Social Studies, has been on the faculty of the Colorado University School of Education (Boulder) and has taught social studies in the public schools at the secondary level.

These educators visited with the National Assessment staff and offered the following observations about the citizenship and social studies results. It should be noted that their comments are their observations as individuals and do not represent the positions of any organizations with which they are affiliated.

General Comments About the Results

- The results are, to these consultants, "disappointing, but not surprising." The assessments spanned a turbulent era in American political history — including the Viet Nam War, campus riots and erosion of confidence in political institutions and persons culminating in the Watergate scandal — and these events may have influenced student political knowledge and attitudes.

- However, considering all that transpired from 1969 to 1976, it is encouraging that students' valuing of constitutional rights and their respect for others did not decline substantially. The basic beliefs that underlie our constitutional system still appear to be valued by most students.

- The most encouraging news is in the area of respect for others. Most young people appear to respect the rights of people of other races, to understand the need for laws and to recognize some problems faced by different groups of people.

- The decline in knowledge about the structure and function of government and the essential concepts underlying democracy is most disappointing and should be the cause for a hard reassessment of the social studies curriculum. Results may reflect changes in curricular emphasis. Also, some of the facts assessed by the tests do not really constitute "essential" knowledge. It is more important to understand the basic concept of democracy, for example, than to remember that the U.S. Senate is the body that approves presidential appointments.

- Students' declining political participation may reflect the attitudes of the adult society. The 1970s have seen an increasing preoccupation with personal goals, a general disillusionment with the political process and a trend toward

conservatism. It is not surprising that youths have been influenced by these tendencies.

- Students have improved in their understanding of ways to avoid future wars and to peacefully settle disputes between nations. This situation, probably a direct result of the national concern with the Viet Nam War, may be an encouraging indication that students are becoming more aware of global interdependence.

Possible Factors in the Decline in Achievement

- During the 1970s, declines have occurred in funding for the social studies, in consultant support at the state and local levels and in the extent to which students take courses dealing with political knowledge. Dr. Ochoa observed that many social studies consultants and coordinators are being eliminated or asked to turn to more general consulting tasks and that required course offerings have decreased. She cited a study by John Patrick of Indiana University indicating that only 26 states currently require students to take a unit in state government.[1]

  In a similar vein, Dr. Butts noted that research by Richard Gross of Stanford University shows that "although American history remains the dominant social studies course in the schools, many pupils do not get U.S. history either in grades seven or eight or in the senior high school."[2] Students today are offered so many electives in the social studies – geography, world history, psychology, sociology, economics, civics, to name a few – that it is difficult for students to share a common base of political knowledge.

- The curriculum in the social studies has undergone changes in emphasis since 1969. In the 1960s, social studies curricula tended to focus upon the separate disciplines. In the 1970s, there has been more stress on the intellectual process – understanding how to construct hypotheses, how to evaluate evidence, how to differentiate between facts and opinions and so forth. This aspect of the social studies has for the most part not been evaluated by current testing efforts.

- Students seemed to improve on facts and concepts that were reinforced by events reported in the media and to do less well on those that were not externally reinforced. For example, knowledge about the U.S. Department of State improved during a period when Henry Kissinger was covered extensively by the media. However, knowledge about the Senate's role in approving treaties may well have declined because few controversial treaties were in the news.

- Textbooks in the area of civics and government are often uninspiring. A review of several studies of textbooks presented in 1971 by the American Political Science Association Committee on Pre-Collegiate Education found that texts tended to emphasize "dreary descriptions" of such things as the powers and duties of governmental departments and officials and the step-by-step process by which a bill becomes law. Texts often presented an idealized view of the working of American democracy. The realities of the American political system were largely untreated, although students are certainly aware, through the media, that the system does not always work in an ideal fashion.[3]

- Teacher training in the social studies is far from uniform across the nation and tends to neglect a basic study of the political and moral foundations of civic education. For instance, National Education Association data on social studies certification show that it would be possible to become a secondary social studies teacher with little or no training in government. Typically,

[1] John Patrick, "Teaching About State Government and Politics" (Given at the Wingspread Conference on Teaching About State Government, March 1977).

[2] Richard E. Gross, "The Status of the Social Studies in the Public Schools of the United States: Facts and Impressions of a National Survey," *Social Education* (March 1977), p. 196.

[3] Report of the American Political Science Association Committee on Pre-Collegiate Education, "Political Education in the Public Schools: The Challenges for Political Science," *Newsletter of the American Political Science Association* Vol. IV, No. 3 (Summer 1971), pp. 7-14.

social studies teachers major in one of the social science disciplines and then take courses in education methods. Too often, they are not sufficiently prepared and do not have an opportunity to develop their own philosophy or competencies as citizens.

- The pressure to return to the "basics" at the elementary level has in many cases reduced the time available for the social studies. Many elementary teachers lack interest or competence in teaching the social studies, and the amount of emphasis on social studies at the elementary level is by no means consistent.[4]

- The schools espouse concepts of democracy but often are run as autocratic communities where the students have little or no voice in decisions affecting them. The contrast between the "hidden curriculum" of the schools – implied through teacher attitudes, administration attitudes, methods of conducting school affairs – and the concepts taught in the social studies curriculum may affect student attitudes.

- Schools appear to do fairly well in areas concentrated upon by teachers. While a tight causal relationship cannot be established, from 1971 to 1975, a time period roughly corresponding to that covered by the citizenship and social studies assessments the number of states having statewide projects in law-related approaches to citizenship education increased from 6 to 26 and the number of active projects jumped from 150 to 400.[5] During that time the assessment revealed an improvement on many law-related items.

Implications of the Results

"Citizenship" is very difficult to define and to teach. As citizens, we are all involved in "citizenship" and all have views on what citizenship education should be. As Dr. Butts has observed, in the early days of our country, citizenship education celebrated the values of national unity, love of country and love of liberty.[6] Now, however, increasing attention to the differences among Americans and the recent abuses of power by those professing democratic ideals have left teachers uncertain about the values to be taught; and neither their general education in college nor their professional education has helped them to arrive at a reasoned moral or civic philosophy.

Dr. Woodley noted that the "bottom line" of citizenship and social studies education must be that we impart those knowledges and attitudes necessary to preserve the underlying unity of our nation and to preserve our system of government. While we must honor the pluralism inherent in the makeup of our society, we need to strike a balance between unity and pluralism so that we do not become divided into separate, isolated factions.

Education for citizenship does not take place only in the schools. Young people learn values and attitudes related to citizenship from their families, their peers, their communities and the media. If the values of the society and the values taught by the schools are in conflict, the schools cannot be expected to counteract single-handedly the values and attitudes conveyed by the society at large, but they should try.

There has as yet been no large public demand for concentration on citizenship education. As Dr. Butts said, 'The schools alone can't do all things. The schools ought to be doing better than they're doing, but it will take public support and public funds." Dr. Ochoa added, "Preparing youth for citizenship is terribly 'basic,' but community pressure is generally focused on improving the quality of education in mathematics and reading and often ignores attention to citizenship education."

The findings published by National Assessment should be carefully considered by those concerned with citizenship education. We have come through a tumultuous period in our history without a sizeable decline in young people's valuing of constitutional rights or their respect for others. However, knowledge

[4] Gross, "Status of the Social Studies," p. 198.

[5] R. Freeman Butts, "Historical Perspective on Civic Education in the United States," in *Education for Responsible Citizenship: The Report of the National Task Force on Citizenship Education* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1977), quoting Law, Education and Participation, "Education for Law and Justice: Whose Responsibility? A Call for National Action," Constitutional Rights Foundation, Los Angeles, Calif., 1975, pp. 46–48.

[6] Butts, "Historical Perspective on Civic Education," p. 48.

about some specific aspects of our government has declined. We must take steps to prevent any further declines and, instead, to improve drastically the range, depth and validity of political knowledge among the youthful population of the nation. We hope that these results can be used to strengthen ongoing programs to better prepare our young people for effective citizenship.

APPENDIX A

DEFINITIONS OF REPORTING GROUPS

The National Assessment of Educational Progress examines results for various groups of people within the national population. These groups are defined as follows.

Group Definitions

Sex

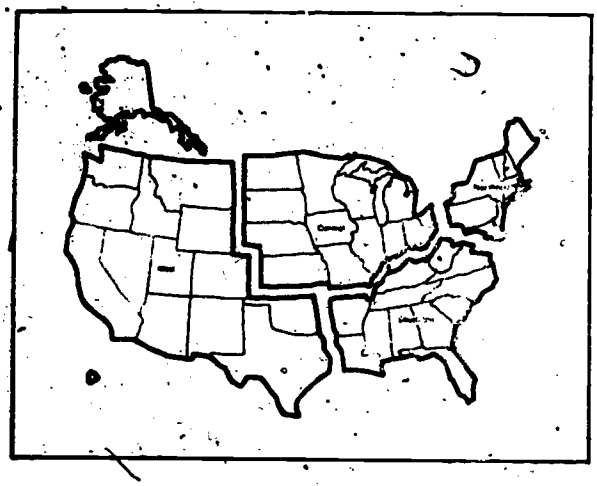
Results are presented for males and females.

Race

Currently, results are presented for blacks and whites.

Region

The country has been divided into four regions — Northeast, Southeast, Central and West. States included in each region are shown on the map following.



Size of Community

Big city. Students in this group attend schools within the city limits of cities with a population over 200,000.

Fringes around big cities. Students in this group attend schools within metropolitan areas served by cities with a population greater than 200,000 but outside the city limits.

Medium city. Students in this group attend schools in cities having a population between 25,000 and 200,000 not classified in the fringes-around-big-cities category.

Smaller places. Students in this group attend schools in communities having a population less than 25,000 not classified in the fringes-around-big-cities category.

Type of Community

These communities are defined by an occupational profile of the area served by a school as well as the size of the community in which the school is located.

Advantaged-urban communities (high metropolitan). Students in this group attend schools in or around cities with a population greater than 200,000 where a high proportion of the residents are in professional or managerial positions.

Disadvantaged-urban communities (low metropolitan). Students in this group attend schools in or around cities with a population greater than 200,000 where a high proportion of the residents are on welfare or are not regularly employed.

Extreme rural. Students in this group attend schools in areas with a population under 10,000 where most of the residents are farmers or farm workers.

Level of Parental Education

Three categories of parental education are defined by National Assessment. These categories are: (1) those whose parents did not graduate from high school, (2) those who have at least one parent who graduated from high school and (3) those who have at least one parent who has had some post high school education.

APPENDIX B

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT ITEM IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS FOR ITEMS SHOWN ON GRAPHS IN CHAPTERS 1–5 AND AGES AT WHICH EACH ITEM WAS ADMINISTERED

This list shows the NAEP item numbers for each item listed on the graphs in Chapters 1–5. The NAEP item numbers can be used to locate items in the *Citizenship/Social Studies Released Exercise Booklet*. An "R" before a number means the item has been released; a "U" indicates that it has not been released. A "127" following a number means that the item was part of the citizenship assessment; a "327" means the item was part of the social studies assessment.

Exercise Description	Exercise Number	Ages at Which Item Administered
CHAPTER 1. Constitutional Rights		
Recognize Constitutional Rights		
Purpose of rights in Constitution	U201002-127	13-17
Need permission/move across state line	R202001-127	9
Freedom while evidence collected	R202002-127-A	13-17
Change of trial location	R202002-127-B	13-17
First 12 jurors need not be accepted	R202002-127-C	13-17
Freedom of speech	U202016-127	9-13
Right to privacy stops unlawful search	R227003-127	13
Limits/power of presidency	R306006-127	9-13-17
Civil rights stated in Constitution	R406006-327	13-17
Freedom of religion in Constitution	R406023-327	13
Value Constitutional Rights		
Times when assembly prohibited	U202018-127-A	13
People for whom assembly prohibited	U202018-127-B	13
Teens have right to express views	R501009-327	13-17
Teens same legal rights as adults	R501010-327	17
Right to petition	U502008-327	17
Allowed to criticize government	U502009-327	13-17
Publish criticism of elected official	R502010-327	13-17
Can publicly express belief no God	R502011-327	13-17
Can hold office if not believe in God	R502012-327	13-17
Freedom of press	U502013-327	17
Libraries have books against democracy	R502017-327	17
Punishment without trial	R503012-327	13-17

Exercise Description	Exercise Numbers	Ages at Which Item Administered
CHAPTER 2. Respect for Others		
Accept other race/5 situations (1)	U101002-127-A-E	13-17
Accept other race/5 situations (2)	R101003-127-A-E	13-17
Understand problems of poor	R103001-327	17
Help grownups	R104001-127	9
Education for all helps nation	R105002-127	13-17
Understand need for law	U201030-127	13-17
Children need rules	R201031-127-A	9
Adults need rules	R201031-127-B	9
Times when assembly prohibited	U202018-127-A	13
People for whom assembly prohibited	U202018-127-B	13
Reason for school rules	R406007-327	9
Teens have right to express views	R501009-327	13-17
Teens same legal rights as adults	R501010-327	17
Allowed to criticize government	U502009-327	13-17
Can publicly express belief no God	R502011-327	13-17
Can hold office if not believe in God	R502012-327	13-17
Freedom of press	U502013-327	17
Libraries have books against democracy	R502017-327	17
Report vandalism to police	R503015-327	17
Concern hurt friend	R505007-327	9
More than one company publishes newspapers	R601030-127	9-13-17
Forget unpopular proposal	R604001-127-A	17
Hold public meeting on proposal	R604001-127-B	17
Adopt proposal without discussion	R604001-127-C	17
Benefits of education	U604002-127	9-13
CHAPTER 3. Structure and Function of Government		
Structure of Government		
Cabinet department spending	U300006-127	13-17
Term of senator	U302001-127	17
How President chosen	U302002-127	9-13
Members of executive branch	R302007-127-A-C-D-F	17
Members of legislative branch	R302007-127-E-G	17
Members of judicial branch	R302007-127-B-H	17
Executive/Secretary of Defense	U302008-127	13
One man/one vote	R302011-127	17
Leader of state/governor	R302029-127	9
No. senators v. representatives	R302031-127	17
Name of Senate	R302032-127	13-17
What is a democracy?	R306004-127	9-13-17
School, highway money from taxes	R306005-127	9-13-17
Tax that produces most money	R306007-127	13-17

Exercise Description	Exercise Numbers	Ages at Which Item Administered
Tax structure	U403005-327	13-17
How President nominated	U406012-327	13-17
Executive/Secretary of State	U406020-327	13-17
Executive branch/local level	U406022-327	9
Supreme Court/majority for decision	R406026-327	17
Function of Government		
Function of local government agencies	U104002-127-A-D	17
Function of local government agencies	R104003-127-A-D	13
Function of local government agencies	U104004-127-A-D	13
Function of local government agencies	R104009-127-A-C	17
Why President heads military	R301002-127	17
Function/Supreme Court	U302010-127	13
Limits/power of presidency	R306006-127	9-13-17
Judge runs trial	R406010-327	9
Senate approves appointments	R406015-327	13-17
Senate approves treaties	R406018-327	13-17
Supreme Court declares laws unconstitutional	R406019-327	13-17
Cabinet Department for foreign affairs	R406021-327	13-17
Level of government/local	U406033-327-A	13-17
Level of government/state	U406033-327-B	13-17
Level of government/state	U406033-327-C	13-17
Level of government/federal	U406033-327-D	13-17
CHAPTER 4. The Political Process		
Willing to Participate in the Political Process		
Unfair law	U206002-127	17
Unfair classroom rule	R206003-127	9
Influence local government decisions	R401001-127	13-17
Influence national government decisions	U401002-127	17
Helped in public election campaign	R404005-127	17
Signed petition	U404006-127	17
Teens help decide courses	R506013-327	13-17
Help decide recess games	R506017-327-A	9
Help decide report topic	R506017-327-B	9
Help decide field trip	R506017-327-C	9
Help decide people to work with	R506017-327-D	9
Help decide need for tutoring	R506017-327-E	9
Written letter to government official	R604003-127	17
Understand the Electoral Process		
How to gather information before voting	U101020-327-A	13-17
Information to obtain before voting	U101020-327-B	13-17
How President chosen	U302002-127	9-13

Exercise Description	Exercise Numbers	Ages at Which Item Administered
How one becomes a senator	R302009-127	13
Advantage of multiparty system	U305001-127	17
Advantages of more than one candidate	R305032-127	13-17
Why vote in secret	R306003-127	13-17
Senator is elected to office	R406011-327	13-17
How President nominated	U406012-327	13-17
Reasons for voting for candidate	U506015-327	13-17
Things to consider before voting	U504001-127	13
Recognize Government Officials		
Name U.S. President	R300001-127	9
Name U.S. President	R300002-127-1	13-17
Name at least one senator or representative	R300002-127-8-9-10	13-17
Select President's picture	R300003-127	9
Name state governor	R300004-127	13-17
Political party/President	R300005-127	13-17
CHAPTER 5. International Affairs		
Interest other countries/trip	R101008-327	9
Interest other countries/pen pal	R101010-327	9-13
Interest other lands	U101022-327-A-B	9-13
Interest political events	U101022-327-C-D	9-13
Purpose of Common Market	R403011-327	13-17
African nations have trouble unifying	R405020-327	17
Name of United Nations	R405035-327	13-17
Goal of United Nations	U406009-327	9-13-17
Prevent future wars	U501002-127	13-17
Reasons/interest other countries	U501003-127	13-17
Settle international dispute	U501004-127	9-13
What is world peace?	R501005-127-A	9
Do we have world peace?	R501005-127-C	9
Purpose of United Nations	R501006-127	13-17

APPENDIX C

POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE AND POLITICAL ATTITUDES

In addition to grouping items in the topics that comprise the chapters of this report, National Assessment also summarized results for items that measured political knowledge or political attitudes. The majority of the items concerned with recognition of constitutional rights, the structure and function of government, the electoral process and recognition of governmental officials measured political knowledge. Questions about political attitudes were concerned with valuing constitutional rights, respect for others and willingness to participate in the political process. Questions about international affairs covered both political knowledge and attitudes.

Political knowledge and political attitudes declined about equally for 13-year-olds on both citizenship and social studies items. However, for 17-year-olds, the decline in political knowledge was approximately twice the drop in political attitudes for both citizenship and social studies items. The number of 9-year-old items was insufficient to support reliable generalizations. Exhibit 14 shows changes in performance for 13- and 17-year-olds on knowledge and attitude items.

EXHIBIT 14. Average Performance in the First and Second Assessments on Citizenship and Social Studies Measuring Political Attitudes and Political Knowledge, Ages 13 and 17

Age 13

	Citizenship						Social Studies					
	Attitudes			Knowledge			Attitudes			Knowledge		
	1970	1976	Change	1970	1976	Change	1972	1976	Change	1972	1976	Change
Average performance	65%	61%	-4*	65%	62%	-3*	66%	64%	-2	50%	48%	-2
Number of items included in average		14			28			12			20	

Age 17

	Citizenship						Social Studies					
	Attitudes			Knowledge			Attitudes			Knowledge		
	1969	1976	Change	1969	1976	Change	1972	1976	Change	1972	1976	Change
Average performance	67%	63%	-4*	73%	65%	-8*	80%	78%	-2*	64%	59%	-5
Number of items included in average		18			30			14			21	

** Indicates significant difference at the .05 level between the first and second assessments.*

APPENDIX D

INTERPRETING CHANGES IN "I DON'T KNOW" RESPONSES

Changes in the percentage of acceptable responses, which is the major focus of this report, should be interpreted in light of the changes in the percentage responding "I don't know." For each cognitive multiple-choice exercise, National Assessment includes "I don't know" among the possible choices. Respondents can also write "I don't know" as an answer to open-ended exercises. National Assessment studies have shown that guessing seems to be reduced when the "I don't know" response is included, providing a more accurate estimate of the percentage who actually know the acceptable response.

Since there were somewhat fewer acceptable responses in the 1975–76 assessment than in the 1969–70 and 1971–72 assessments, we might expect more "I don't know" responses in 1975–76. In fact, several specific examples of increases in "I don't know" responses were noted for exercises presented in Chapters 1–5. In addition, with a decrease in acceptable responses we might also see an increase in unacceptable responses, indicating more misinformation or guessing concerning the item assessed. For all exercises with "I don't know" options in this report, the three age groups assessed followed the same trend: the decline in acceptable responses was accompanied by both an increase in "I don't know" responses and an increase in unacceptable responses. This means that the declines in percentages of correct answers most likely reflect declines in knowledge and not simply increases in willingness to say "I don't know."

Some smaller clusters of items grouped in the chapters did not behave as the entire set behaved at ages 13 and 17. Declines in mean percentages were accompanied by proportionately greater tendencies to respond "I don't know" on items related to respect for others, valuing constitutional rights and attitudes toward other cultures. Since these items generally asked about student's attitudes, the shift from positive responses to "I don't know" is more difficult to interpret. It may signal an increase in confusion about values, a growing awareness of the complexity of these issues or less willingness to reveal personal attitudes.

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